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MORNING

COMMUNINGS WITH GOD;

OR,

DEVOTIONAL MEDITATIONS

FOR

EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

BY

CHRISTOPHER CHRISTIAN STURM,

AUTHOR OF "REFLECTIONS ON THE WORKS OF GOD," "CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST," ETC.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN,

BY W. JOHNSTONE, A.M.

Sixth Edition.

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PREFACE.

THE name of Sturm has become so naturalized amongst us, that we scarcely remember that the honour of his birth appertains not to our country; and there are few of our native productions so extensively known, so generally applauded, or perused with so much pleasure as that sweet exotic—the REFLECTIONS. To transplant, therefore, at length, though late, another flower from the sacred parterre of this devout and elegant author into the soil of British literature and worship, is a lot, in which, were my reputation and avocations as lofty and brilliant as they are lowly and obscure, I could not otherwise than boast and rejoice.

It is not my present purpose to inquire wherefore this office has not been performed earlier, or by a

more skilful hand :—it certainly could not be from want of due encouragement of the former work of the same original ; since that has attained to a popularity enjoyed by no other production from the stores of German literature, and is almost considered as a standard English work.

My task has not, however, been totally unattended by difficulties : and in the number of these, that continual recurrence of the same terms and expressions, which, in my opinion, is frequently both energetic and elegant in the original, but which seems so little to accord with the genius of my own language, often painfully obstructed my progress, and rendered it not rarely embarrassing, and not always possible to escape an irksome uniformity of language. Wrapped up and absorbed in the holy earnestness of his meditations and emotions—for he was no enthusiast teacher of lip-and-paper feelings only—Sturm, on many occasions, approaches more closely to the style of rapid and spontaneous thinking, than to that of slow and studied writing ; and hence his sentences sometimes bear palpable marks of instantaneous conception ; and the same word is employed in a per-

plexing variety of acceptations. My wish has been, and if I am disappointed I cannot accuse my exertions, to transfuse into my translation all the sentiments—if it could be, the sensations—and, as far as was consistent with the genius of my own tongue, the idiom of the Pastor of Hamburgh.

But I will no longer dwell upon what I consider the merits or deficiencies of my own labours: censure or approbation I must now patiently await from the award of criticism. Whatever, moreover, be the opinion formed regarding the present work, as a literary performance, I trust that the larger portion of my readers will be too deeply affected by the devotional spirit and pious rapture it displays to think of scanning its defects with the coolness of mere criticism. As to the topics contained in these Meditations, readers of every station in life, and of every sect of Christianity, may be invited to peruse them; for although none of them bear reference to any particular rank or contingency of life, and few to any calendered day, yet each is so contrived that it is at once adapted to every rank in society, and every exigence and circumstance of human nature, whether

common or special, bodily or spiritual, prosperous or adverse, and to every season, whether gay or serious, festal or profane; and the doctrine is strictly suited to the universal preaching of the temple not built by men's hands, but capacious enough to admit the reunion of all who acknowledge the name, at least, of Jesus—*The Doctrine of the Mount.*

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MORNING COMMUNINGS WITH GOD.

JANUARY 1.

Acknowledgment to God for the Mercy of prolonged Existence.

The goodness of my heavenly Father permits me again to behold the commencement of a new year; yet longer on this earth shall I enjoy his mercy, and possess the opportunity of preparing myself with increased care and fidelity for his celestial kingdom. O how unfortunate should I have been, if with yesterday the period of my trial and probation for eternity had finished! Yet, to my soul's salvation does the Lord of my days prolong my life a few hours. I have still time to reflect on the days which yesterday fled for ever; those days of salvation, which I have not always wisely and dutifully spent, or at least not constantly employed according to the views of God. No one of them returns; but the sorrowful recollection of them will sooner or later arrive, will represent to me my errors in lively colours, and occasion me unspeakable anguish. How many hours and days of this precious season of trial have I dissipated and lost either in idleness, or culpable enjoyment! O! with what bitter remorse shall I hereafter, when my final hour is come, think of this squandered time,—how anxiously desire to have it back! But in order to avoid this last grievous torment, I will now devote the first morning of the early year to the retrospection of my past life; I will profit by the present hours in order to make a prudent use of the future term of my pilgrimage.

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Yet how can I speak of future days while the passing moments are so uncertain, and I dare scarcely call this immediate minute my own property! No, this instant must be as judiciously employed, as I have to wish that my whole life had been.

This minute is short, but yet long enough to display to me my negligence, my insensibility, and my unthankfulness. Beloved Father, grant me a wise heart to consider the value of time, and a willing heart to use it according to its worth. If I do not prize the minutes of my existence, neither shall I regard hours and days; and even on one single minute often depends the fate of all the days that are before us. Thou demandest as severe an account of one mispent minute, as of the half century which I have spent to no purpose.

Here my soul trembles. God, my God, be gracious unto me. When all the days of my existence rush into my memory; when thou callest me to a reckoning concerning them, and I am obliged to stand mute; in the last hour of my life; under thy strict decisive judgment, be thou gracious unto me; for Jesus' sake, be thou gracious unto me!

God, thou seest beforehand, how I shall employ this year of which I now hail the first morning. Thou foreknowest the sins which I shall commit, the temptations to which I shall be exposed, and the sufferings which I shall have to endure. In all these various circumstances be thou gracious to me. If I transgress, chastise me not in thy wrath; when I am tempted, let me not be overcome; when I suffer, have compassion upon me. God, be thou my help, my comfort, my aim, and my guide. I recommend myself to thy good guidance. Be my God in life and in death. O God, be thou also my God in eternity.

JANUARY 2

Eternity the Scope of Life.

My destination is the most important and the most exalted. The whole world with its changes and vicissitudes, my own condition, the brief period of my stay on this earth, the

fleetness of the present minute, in fine, every thing announces to me this fact, that I am intended for eternity. But yet more certain is my conviction, when I consider myself as one of the redeemed of Jesus. All the sufferings which my Saviour felt, all the benefits which through his atonement he has procured for me, are so many proofs that my soul belongs to eternity. I rejoice beyond utterance when I reflect upon this happiness. But how deeply am I forced to bewail many of my brethren, who, unmindful of their heavenly calling, go on amid the enjoyments of sensuality and fail in their appointment.

Still these unfortunate beings mistake their own true value, nor know their real happiness! Only forget not, thou, my soul, that thou livest for eternity. When thy weak heart entices thee to sin, forget not that the deceitful gratifications of vice are unsuitable for those who know the ambition of an everlasting existence. When thou standest still in the way of godliness, when thou art weary, or wouldst even draw back, O! then forget not that the path of virtue ends in the happiest manner in eternity. When the troubles of this life would render thee fearful and dismayed, then forget not that it is shame and misery to sacrifice to them the joys of eternity. And when at length thou castest off the mortal covering, forget not then that the eternity to which death conveys thee, is a complete indemnification for such a loss.

Be therefore this higher life to which I am destined my constant aim; and let the remembrance of this my destiny fit me properly to employ that time on which, however long or short it shall be, the happiness or the unhappiness of eternity rests. Carefully therefore will I estimate it; and will judge all my actions according to the value which they may have in eternity. Far be it from me to confine myself, with my wishes and endeavours, merely to this transitory and uncertain life. Father of eternity, teach me this wisdom, instil it deeply into my soul, that I am created and redeemed for eternity. What were I, if I knew not this? What were my life—how frightful would be my death, if I believed not this? But the carnal possessions of this world often stifle these high ideas. Thou must thyself, O God, call them forth and maintain them in my soul. Thou must give me grace, that eternity be not only heard on my lips, but that it be

profoundly and indelibly engraven on my heart.—And for this favour do I entreat thee, kind and everlasting Parent. Teach me to reflect—teach me, this day, to reflect, that I am a citizen of yon better world, and a child of eternity. Even this day and each of its hours constitute a portion of my period of preparation for my last change. If thou governest me, then shall I employ these inestimable moments to my perpetual good, and under every temptation to wickedness, under every suffering, under every trial, fortify myself with the thought—I LIVE HERE FOR ETERNITY.

JANUARY 3.

God's Perfections and Love.

WHAT adoration dost thou deserve, God, my Creator, for having given me a soul capable of acknowledging thee! How greatly hast thou herein exalted me above many of thy creatures! How insignificant am I, when I compare myself with those bodies which thy almighty hand has fixed in the immeasurable vault of the heavens? yet how important do I appear to myself, when I reflect, that these splendid masses can neither comprehend their own beauty, nor the excellency of their Maker! Each production of the animal kingdom magnifies thy greatness, O God! but the spirit which thou hast granted to me, and which knows thee and honours thee, proclaims yet more perfectly thy wise omnipotence. Every plant is an image of thy infinite power: but it knows thee not. I however know thee, and I know too that I am thy image. Yet would that my soul might clearly see likewise its own worth, and thankfully value it! How great, my God, how highly favoured am I, that I possess the capacity to acknowledge thee; that heaven and earth, and all that is therein, announce to me thy supremacy, and that I am able to feel this thy unparalleled superiority! It is an incalculable privilege for me, that I am a participator in such happiness. But render it also my delight, thou source of perfection, to confess thee and to reverence thee. To acknowledge thee, the true God, and thy Son, Jesus Christ, my

Mediator, be this my chief employment, my only wisdom. How unsearchably hast thou loved me in thy Son! This love, which passeth all knowledge, let me fully perceive, and worthily praise. In every benefit and in every chastisement, thou permittest me to recognise in thee my Friend and my Father. How should I do otherwise than listen to thy voice, and turn my heart to thee full of thankfulness and reverence? How should I not love thee, who art even love itself? But I am amazed at my own insensibility. My whole life displays to me so many, such countless proofs of thy affection—and I, void of love and ungrateful, how coldly do I regard them! How indifferent is my heart, which thy love ought to inflame! So many invitations have been made to me to love thee—and I, unmoved, have slighted them all! O God, I vow to thee, with shame and repentance, that I will now henceforward receive thy bounties with sincere thankfulness, and show myself more worthy of thy beneficence.

Even this day, I humbly trust in thy mercy, will not be destitute of the evidences of thy compassionate tenderness. And even this is a gift of love, that I am still able to breathe, to move, and to live, both for the world and for heaven. But I shall receive yet stronger testimonies of thy faithfulness. Thy patience will still bear with me to-day; thy providence will watch over me and my existence; thy Spirit will produce in my heart the earnest will, and the upright accomplishment of good works; Jesus will be my Advocate before thee; and thou wilt fill my soul with nourishment and joy. All this, and whatever else is needful for my happiness, do I, relying upon thee, expect from thy inexhaustible benevolence. And should even suffering be the portion which thou to-day appointest to me, I will still denominate it goodness; and in the bad as well as the fair season, boast and acknowledge thy parental constancy. Only manifest to me, true and merciful Father, this grace, that I may discover thee in all the dispensations of thy favour, and love thee with my whole heart. And should this day conduct me to eternity, then let me depart in thy knowledge, and in the faith and love of my Redeemer, and pass into that world, where to know thee and to adore thee will be our highest blessedness.

JANUARY 4.

The Christian's Happiness and Fate rest with the Deity.

What indeed is there that can disquiet my bosom, if with a grateful and satisfied heart I enjoy the present, and in regard to the future, place my hope in God? He knows all my wants, and possesses likewise the means of relieving them. His mercy will not deny me that which is really salutary for me. Why should I confide my welfare to men, who are even as perishable as that welfare which I expect from them? Why should I pass my days in anxiety? My prosperity is in the hands of the Lord: he has already fixed the hour when it shall arrive: he has already determined its duration, and how long I shall be glad in it. Trust in him, O my soul, and resign thyself to his wise and gracious governance, which orders all things for thy true benefit.

But the future!—O! how sorrowful am I often when I look forward to it! How much trouble, perhaps, awaits me in the day when I shall be old and hoary! What if my friends, who are now my comfort, desert me? or what, if a long and painful sickness destroy my health? Perhaps poverty, contempt, and various other miseries are to imbitter the peace of my remaining days!—Cowardly heart! wherefore this solicitude! The events of the future rest with God: he that rules all destinies has appointed thy fate to thee too. And what destiny, except that which is the most profitable for thee, can be anticipated from him? Granting even that in the future such occurrences as are disagreeable crowd into thy space of life: yet still will they be advantageous, since for wise purposes they will be allotted to thee by thy Father. And what avail thy melancholy presentiments? Can they arrest the misfortune which thou seest afar off, or alleviate its accompanying grievances?—Leave the future to the Lord. The lot which he has for thee is the best and the happiest; and if still any care concerning the future affect thee, then think of death, the grave, and judgment. Labour only for the salvation of thy soul, which depends upon thyself; and choose the path that leadeth to that most desirable

attainment. Yet even in this point also has thy Father been provident for thee. He has destined to thee a blessed immortality, and through Jesus assured it to thee: walk therefore as it becomes a being to whom so high a destiny is appointed. Live in the faith of the Son of God, and in the hope of a happy consummation: then will the future have nothing in it alarming for thee.

God, and Father of my life, I thank thee for this consolation. The belief that my happiness, both in this and in the other world, lies in thy keeping, shall fully tranquillize my mind! To thee do I look for every thing: for every portion of my existence, and for this day also, wilt thou appoint to me so much as is actually needful for my felicity. I will accept every thing thankfully from thy hands; even the cup of woe, which thou mayst, perhaps, present to me, will I drink cheerfully, and say, as my Jesus said, "Thy will be done!" With these sentiments will I proceed, full of comfort, and trust in the way in which thou commandest me to go. Thou wilt likewise, throughout the rest of my life, continue to be my God and my Saviour. I trust in thy omnipotent goodness. Thou wilt make all well.

JANUARY 5.

The amazing Goodness of the Lord.

How great, Father, is thy goodness! I cannot express it: but I will adore it, and admire it. I cannot comprehend its infinite immensity; but I will consider my own nothingness, my own poverty, my own unworthiness, in which it so exceedingly exalts itself. The smaller I become in my own eyes, the greater will the goodness of my God appear. Lord, who am I, that thou so favourest me? In the dust must I worship thee, since I myself am only dust and ashes. I strive with all my powers to contemplate thy goodness—that goodness which is the theme of the songs of praise of the whole heavens. My soul is amazed at this contemplation. Where shall I begin to glorify thee? or where shall I find the boundary at which I can cease? Unlimited beneficence!

thy kindness has no commencement: thy mercy has no end. While yet the world was not, even then did it already exist; ere I yet was, even then did it already occupy itself with my wellbeing. And what did it not do, when at length I entered into the world? What does it not still do for me? What will it not hereafter do for me? Everlasting Deity! who can conceive thy goodness? who can relate thy wonders?

I, who am by nature so little, so poor, so despicable, so wretched, so perishable, through thy goodness am rendered thus great, thus rich, thus honoured, thus happy, thus immortal. God, I am a miracle to myself, when I consider myself. My soul is thy gift; this soul that thinks of thee, that fears thee, and loves thee. Thy gift also is the immortality to which it is destined. Thy mercy too is it, that I can serve thee with a contented spirit, and honour thee with a tranquil heart. Thy goodness supports my faculties; it maintains my energies; it crowns my life; it prospers my ways. Lord, what I was, what I am, and what I shall hereafter be, is all thy gift, is all thy goodness.

Meditate, O my soul, and ponder upon the richness of the goodness of God. Renew every moment thy remembrance of that mercy that has raised thee out of thy nothingness to so exalted a condition; think of this especially, whenever thy proud heart would seduce thee to mistake thy own meanness and the eminent dignity of thy Maker. What wert thou, if the All-beneficent had not compassion upon thee? And what would all thy advantages avail, if the hand of the Omnipotent, which vouchsafed them to thee, should not continue to preserve them for thee? Through his compassion art thou thus further advanced in the path of thy existence. One morning more has the Lord prolonged the days of thy pilgrimage, and the period of thy preparation for eternity. Accomplish this day the affectionate designs of thy Preserver. Glorify his goodness through every thing which thou shalt this day undertake. Be every thought of thy soul, every sentiment, every inclination of thy heart, directed to the Lord, through whom thou art able to think and to feel. If he grant thee to-day a quiet and satisfied mind, if he rescue thy life from dangers and destruction, then think of him, then love him, then glorify him. Yes, God of all kindness, it is my earnest purpose to praise thee, both in my spirit and my

body, of which each alike is thy gift. Do thou guard me, that, through unthankfulness and ungodliness, I render myself not unworthy of thy benevolence; nor, amid the vast number of thy benefits, forget thee, my Benefactor. Guided by thy goodness, spared by thy compassion, protected by thy providence, and blessed by thy beneficence, I will go boldly forward in the course which thou hast prescribed to me, and at every step, on the reception of every benefit, rejoice in thee as in my propitiated Father.

JANUARY 6.

The Consideration of Christ's Sufferings an Antidote against Disappointment.

When I go with joyfulness and zeal to my daily occupations; when, out of reverence and love to God, and out of an earnest affection for my fellow-mortals, I perform, indefatigably and assiduously, that which duty and my profession demands from me, to whom do I owe this pious disposition of mind? To thee, my Saviour, who hast both left for me a pattern of love and fidelity, and gone before me in the way that leads to God. How can I complain of the burdens of my own calling, when I think of those thou hadst to endure, and with what patience thou didst bear them? How can I sigh over the ingratitude of men, when I think how sorely thy heart was wounded by human blindness and unthankfulness! How can I murmur, if God this day command me to follow a rough path, when I consider how thorny the way was that thou wast forced to pursue, and how faithful and obedient thou didst continue even unto the death of the cross! Thus then will I look up to thee, when my pusillanimous heart trembles, when my soul is sad, when my courage is ready to sink. That thou disdainest not to become like to us, and to endure the sorrows of life,—this reflection shall console and cheer me in every melancholy hour, in every care-worn day. Do I live here, in this life of trial, amidst a warfare that never ends, still I will not be dismayed: for what might can overcome me, since thou

standest beside me, as an example of fortitude? My life is a complication of woes and troubles. But thy first healing tears, thy lowly birth, thy despised appearance, thy deep humiliation, O thou, for me, debased and suffering child—these render my misery supportable, and assuage the poignancy of my pains. Immanuel! my soul loses itself in these contemplations. O! how then would it have been with me, if I had beheld thee in this profound humility, and heard the thanksgiving hymns of the angels thy servants! Yet, my soul, a greater happiness is in store for thee. Thou shalt see him, even thy Saviour shalt thou see! And if once thou wouldst have shed tears of pity at his debasement, so shalt thou hereafter at the spectacle of his elevation and his divine greatness, exult with loudest jubilee. O Jesus, restorer of blessedness, thou who wast born for me, lead me to that state of joy, always to behold, and incessantly to worship thee. But here, so long as I am yet a pilgrim, here let me live worthy of the dignity to which thou hast destined me. As thou didst voluntarily strip thyself of thy divine majesty, so give me grace to renounce the ungodliness and the lusts of the world. Teach me, my Redeemer, to live for thee, since thou for my good didst sacrifice thy entire earthly existence. Then, too, when I draw near to my end, let me die to thee, who didst die for me; and, relying on thy merits, depart into that better world which thou vouchsafedst to quit in order to win it for me. As long as I live, the recollection of thy humbleness and thy faithfulness shall powerfully strengthen me in belief in, and in love towards thee. I will extol thee by my songs of praise, but yet more by my life. For thou, O my God, and my Saviour, alone deservest honour and adoration, glory and thanksgiving.

JANUARY 7.

Contemplating his Saviour's Resignation and Patience, the Christian resolves to imitate him.

How were it possible, that amid such powerful incentives to godliness, I could remain insensible? But yet, how often

does my heart contemn all these encouragements? Neither the example of the blessed spirits, nor the conduct of my Saviour, tempt me to pursue the way in which life and felicity are found. But be it enough, that for so long a time I have neglected my real good! This new day is a new incitement to me to select the path of holiness. I am determined to follow it: but, O God, do thou thyself show me the track in which I ought to go, and rule my steps that I may abide in the same. Teach me to act according to thy pleasure, and let thy good Spirit carry me along in the straight way.

Under thy gracious guidance, O my God, I desire thus to tread the course to which thy will and my salvation call me. But where, in the instability and obstinacy of my heart, shall I obtain the power that may render me ready and fit to walk in the prescribed direction? I see beforehand how often I shall stumble, become weary, fall, stand still, or even turn back. O then, if my heart is thus weak, let my soul be strengthened and encouraged by the example of the glorified spirits. Yet still more let the pattern of my Saviour influence me, who not only points out to me the road to heaven, but has himself travelled it. And how thorny was the way in which he went! Yet was he never tired. With a ready and a patient heart did he hasten to do the will of his Father. And I, shall I not imitate him? shall I shudder at the sufferings which may chance to beset my pilgrimage! No, I will tread in the footsteps of my Mediator, and, as truly and as constantly as he did, proceed in my appointed journey. However small may be the number of my companions, I will not forsake the route in which I have the angels for my fellow-travellers, all the pious for my co-mates, and God himself for a witness. Their society and their approbation are more valuable to me than the intercourse and the applause of the vicious. Hard as the duties of Christianity may appear to my feeble heart, in the same degree will they become easy to me, when I look up to thee in faith, thou Prince of my salvation.

These are the resolutions with which I enter anew upon the career which is this morning opened to me. But, O God, fortify me and support me in my purpose! That I may continue true to virtue and sanctity, that I may not let

myself be seduced by the allurements of the world, but may freely and manfully pursue my course, and may be well pleasing to thee—all this must thou thyself effect, thou Lord and Father of my life. I supplicate thee on high for this grace. O thou who hearest the petitions of thy children, let me not proceed in my destination without thy guidance and defence. Discover to me all the deceitful paths into which, to my destruction, I might wander. Strengthen me when I become languid; sustain me when I totter; aid me to rise when I fall. Perhaps I have yet only a few paces to advance, and I shall approach to the close of my circuit, and to the decision of my everlasting destiny. Yet, whether I be still far distant from the appointed goal of my race, or already near upon it, if only thou, my God and Saviour, guide me, either circumstance will redound to my bliss.

JANUARY 8.

Man lives in the Presence of his Maker.

Omnipresent! I stand before thee and pray! rejoicing that thy eyes look upon me, that thou givest heed to my secret supplication, and hearest my sighs. How happy am I, that in every solitude, in every corner of the earth, thou art near me; that I am seen and regarded by thee! But I tremble at the same time, when I think, that thy all-searching glance penetrates the depths of my heart, and discovers the most concealed sentiments of my soul. O! how much wickedness wilt thou behold in this my heart! How many of my unknown sins wilt thou become acquainted with! I will not, I cannot deny to thee, thou searcher of the heart, that I am a sinful being. There remains nothing for me but to implore thy pity. God, let thy grace be nigh to me. Thou seest me; look then graciously upon me. Thou hearest me; listen then propitiously to the groans and wishes of my bosom.

Even this day shall I be observed by thee, O omniscient God. Thou wilt be an eye-witness to all my actions. I shall not be able to form an idea which thou wilt not know;

to utter a speech which thou wilt not hear; to do ought which thou wilt not remark. With sacred awe do I now reflect upon thy omnipresence. Would that this reflection and this awe might not vanish with the present moment! Would that I might have thee constantly in view, such as I now represent thee to my mind! Yet what prevents me from retaining uninterruptedly this conception? The lust of vanity, the inclination of sin, the negligence of my heart, stifle every such reflection in my soul. But I will strive, through thy grace, O Lord, to vanquish these obstacles. I will imprint it deeply in my memory, and constantly preserve the influence of the recollection that I walk before thy countenance.

May the conviction of thy universal presence accompany me into my solitude, and render every instant in which I am occupied with thee still dearer to me! Let the remembrance of thee, the Omniscient, guard me from iniquity, and excite me to the most faithful and cheerful exercise of virtue. O! what tranquillity will my spirit feel, when it becomes assured, that thy eyes beam upon me with approbation! Every benefit that I bestow upon the needy, every tear that I wipe away from the cheeks of my distressed brethren, every victory that I obtain over my passions, every pious deed that I practise in stillness, thou, O Lord, notest and rewardest. Thus, though no one should mark or value my integrity, yet if thou only knowest it, I am happy and satisfied. It may be also that no one perceives my sufferings and my secret anguish; but I am already comforted when I reflect that thou, O God, countest my tears and regardest my sighs. And could I then forget thee? Ah! no: my heart commands me never to let thee depart from my eyes. With reverence will I always continue mindful of thee, that I may assure myself of thy gracious observance. And am I certain of thy favour, then will every thing in this world conduce for the best in regard to me. If my way is before thy face, then will even the dark valley become light, and the flinty path agreeable. Thus then let thy eyes watch me, have attention to my steps, and graciously regard my life. Under thy providence nothing will be wanting to me; but goodness and mercy follow me all my life long. In eternity shall I yet thank thee, that thou hast been my God and my Helper.

JANUARY 9.

The Greatness of God compared with the Insignificance of Man.

NEVER do I more forcibly feel my own nothingness, than when I contemplate thy greatness, O my God, and the greatness of thy benefits. How can I think of thee, thou essence of all being, without perceiving at the same time that I am only dust and ashes? How can I regard thy benevolence, without being sensible of my own unworthiness? Lord, what am I, that thou so graciously considerest me? I am too mean for all the mercy and all the faithfulness which from the first instant of my life to the present hour thou hast manifested towards me. Where was there a minute void of thy lovingkindness? When did an hour elapse without the display of thy bountifulness? What day has thy goodness not distinguished? When did a year ever pass away that proclaimed not to me thy paternal affection? What is man, that thou art so mindful of him? or the race of men, that thou so regardest them? Lord, I am struck with involuntary amazement, when I reflect what I am become through thy compassion. Out of my insignificance thou hast exalted me to the dignity of human nature; out of my neediness, to riches; out of my misery, to happiness; out of my unworthiness, to the honour of being thy child, and to the participation of thy blessing. Me, who deserved to be nothing, poor, miserable, and condemned—me, has thy compassion in Christ Jesus so eminently favoured! Lord! that which I am is thy grace. Be thy overflowing mercifulness for ever praised and adored by me! As often as I contemplate it, will I extol it; and as often as I think of thee, will I revere thee. And what am I, Lord, that I dare to worship thee?—that thou, to whom all heaven pays obeisance, despisest not the homage of a mortal? Infinite God! while now I prostrate myself before thee, I feel how great is the happiness and honour, that a worm may thus worship thee. O! that it might be my employment throughout my whole life to contemplate thy greatness, thou Supreme Deity, and my own lowliness. Memorials of these will never be wanting to me. My imperfection, my fragile body, my corrupted state, my narrowly bounded perceptions,

my toilsome life, my whole being will every moment tell me how little, how miserable I am. But thy unlimited greatness, will heaven and earth, reason and revelation, thy chastisements and benefactions alike declare to me. I will be attentive to these voices ; they shall excite me to walk before thee in humility and submission, and to ascribe honour to thy mighty name. For thou, O Lord, art alone worthy, that men and angels glorify thee.

Let, then, my whole soul employ its utmost zeal to know and praise, O ! thou All-adorable, thy greatness ! but especially let it be devoted, in faith and love, to the Redeemer of the world, through whose atonement I am thus proudly ennobled. I am one of the redeemed of Jesus ; and thence have procured, O Lord, a right to thy fatherly esteem, to thy forgiveness, and to thy patience, of which, as a man and a sinner, I was undeserving. To thee, Ransomer of the world, do I owe, that I can regard the Creator of all nature as my Father; and from him, moreover, after this life, expect the blessedness of heaven. O ! what shall I then be, when the grace of Jesus raises me to that state of glory which he has obtained for me, and for my salvation taken possession of? O God, I cannot express how much this anticipation delights me. In heaven I shall more clearly perceive how great, how exalted, how blessed that man is whom Jesus has redeemed.

JANUARY 10.

Approach to Death, the Grave, and Judgment.

I ADVANCE every day nearer to death, to the grave, to eternity. And who knows, perhaps I have already, without suspecting it, arrived at the verge of the tomb that shall open after a few minutes, or a few hours, to receive me. This much I know with certainty,—the oftener I behold the morning sun, the closer I approach to the evening of my life. I cannot conceal it ; this thought fills me with sadness and disquietude. To be nigh to death, to the grave, to eternity, God ! what a serious, frightful idea ! And yet it is not possible for me to doubt of their approximation. Of

this alone I doubt—whether I am so prepared, that I can meet my last hour with joyfulness and hope. In order, therefore, that impending death and eternity may not alarm me, I must draw nearer, O my God, to thee: but my conscience, this loud, powerful witness, tells me that my heart is still far from thee; and that I should be everlastingly miserable, were I so near death as to preclude all delay and all return.

What, if then to-day for the last time I have beheld in this world the dawning light, and now for the last time offer up to thee my orisons;—if in the midst of my sighs death should seal my lips, and my first words on the morning of this day be the last of my existence? Ah, God, how sorrowful am I under this presentiment! And how easily is it possible that the supposition may be realized! How soon, and with what facility may some tender part of my weak and fragile frame lose its activity, some drop of blood change its course, and then instantly death is in my limbs—I stand before the tribunal of my God! Is it then certain, that, according to the laws of mortality, ere this hour be fled, to nearly four thousand inhabitants of the earth the lot of death will fall? and can I be sure that I shall not appear in this number? Yet, though this may be an idle conjecture, one fact is still unquestionable, that death may overtake me at a time when I least apprehend its presence, but am perhaps flattering myself with the promise of a long-protracted life.

This uncertainty of the approach of my death should teach me the wisdom of constantly thinking of it; and the remembrance of death instruct me in the necessity of unceasingly preparing myself for it. Wherefore should I defer this important business, since every delay is so uncertain and so dangerous? Now, at this very moment, while I yet hear, yet see, yet feel, will I undertake my amendment. Now it is still easy: how hard it will be, when I have grown old in my sins! Now I have still the power to think, to feel, to repent: how much more labour would then be necessary, if sickness or age enfeebled and even obstructed the faculties of my mind! Now I can still do good, and make the fruits of my improvement visible. But I shall be obliged to dispense with this satisfaction, if I turn to good only when dying. The present moment is still mine. Will

the next minute be also in my possession?—O God, let me profit wisely by this moment, and as I think now, so let me think through every part of the day. If I am this morning far from thee, yet may I in the evening experience the happiness of having come nearer to thee. Thus, let death be as nigh to me as it may, I will only perceive in its arrival the approach of my eternal felicity.

JANUARY 11.

Exaltation of the Soul through Faith in Jesus

O! THAT my soul, which is so firmly fettered by the force of earthly things, would allow itself to be wholly carried away by that gentle violence, which belongs to faith in Jesus Christ! What are all the charms of the world, what are all its pomps, in comparison to those unspeakable possessions, which thy expiation, O Saviour, has obtained for me?—They are dust. And how much should I debase myself, if, with such mighty and exalted hopes, and such splendid privileges, as I owe to thy redemption, I should toil after objects which appear, in the light of Christianity, nugatory and unworthy of a rational being, after the empty honour of men, after sensuality and luxury! Ye riches of this world, how insignificant are ye, when I consider that treasure which has been bestowed upon me through Jesus, that wealth of a better world, of which no power can rob me! Earthly friends! how vain, how inconstant is your love! Demand not my entire heart, which I have already consecrated to him, who is my best and most steadfast Friend. Thou honour of the world! how easily can I dispense with thee, when I reflect on my pre-eminence in having become through Christ a child of God, and an inheritor of salvation! To no purpose do ye tempt me, ye joys of time: those views which the hope of a blessed immortality unfolds to me are more delightful and of far greater preponderance than any display of terrestrial happiness. Thou whole world! thou art not deserving of my wishes: thou art too small for a

spirit that only finds its repose, its contentment, its felicity in the belief of eternity.

But why do I not always think thus nobly? Ah! how often have I permitted myself to be seduced by trifling attractions to forget the joys and the recompense of eternity! How often have I been so foolish as to prefer earthly wealth to the riches of grace! How little influence has the contemplation of the sufferings of Jesus had over my heart to make it renounce sin and all ungodliness! How insensible have I been, when all around me has invited me to the feeling of God's grace, and to the love of his Only-begotten! And, perhaps, if at this moment worldly allurements were to approach me, the holy sentiments which I now entertain would be obliterated. How misled, how vain, how corrupted is my heart! I see how absolutely necessary thy grace is to me. God! I implore thee that thou grant me thy support to subdue my passions, to tame my inclinations, and through courageous self-denial to draw nearer to piety and wisdom! O! that my heart might be always as it now is, filled with sacred zeal, so as joyfully for the sake of conscience to relinquish every happiness and advantage on earth; be ever filled with the hallowed love which impels me to abandon all for Jesus' sake, and for him, my Saviour, to live and die! O! that the sufferings of my Redeemer were so dear to me, that I might with willingness resolve to take his cross upon me, and continue steadfast in following him!

I am determined, my God, and to thee this morning do I vow, that nothing shall separate me from my love for Jesus. And if I love him, then do I love all that is good and noble; then do I love my brethren both in truth and in deed; then do I love thee, O God, with my whole heart and my whole soul. If I love him, then shall I have strength, with patience and works of virtue, to strive after eternal life; then shall I be able to assure myself, O Lord, of thy blessing in all the concerns of this existence, and at length through faith in thee to depart out of the world with cheerful fortitude.

JANUARY 12.

The Ways of God Mysterious, but full of Wisdom and Goodness.

HERE on this earth all around me is darkness! How little do I know the Lord who has placed me in the world! how little do I know of the world itself! And how much is there concealed from me even in regard to my own being! However much I may know concerning thee and thy nature, O God, yet is all my knowledge patchwork and imperfection. I cannot think of thee without perceiving how incomprehensible thou art, thou infinite Deity! And the ways by which thou conductest me, how mysterious, how unsearchable are they for me! In order to raise me to dignity, thou debasest me; in order to bless me, thou withdrawest from me that which my heart accounts bliss; in order to render me happy, thou afflictest me! Truly thou art a hidden God, thou God of Israel! But let it ever continue to be my comfort that thou art my sanctifier. The nearer I approach to the end of thy guidance in these lower regions, the more the obscurity which involves my path disperses. Hereafter when thou orderest me to quit the world, shall I understand more fully wherefore thou hast stationed me in it. Then will much become clear that was unintelligible to me: much will appear wise to me over which my heart lamented. Yet still more perfect will be my perceptions in that better world, to which thy grace, through Christ, has destined me. Have I been miserable here? I shall there learn that this misery was a blessing. Have I been here compelled to sow in tears? So shall I there comprehend how salutary they were, and reap in joy. Hast thou here, O God, given me a short, toilsome life? There shall I praise thee that, instead of a brief portion of labour thou hast allotted to me everlasting enjoyment. Hast thou here taken away from me that which was dearest and most agreeable to me—the pleasures and the comfort of my life? So shall I there confess how little reason I had to regret them. I shall perceive the scope, the goodness, the wonders of thy ordinances, and for ever adore thee that thou hast been pleased to lead me so marvellously and excellently.

Await, O my soul, this period, which promises to thee the solution of all the difficulties which here thou art unable to unravel. Perhaps the Lord will still carry thee through paths which may appear dreary to thee on account of their gloominess; and which thou mayest deem ways of misfortune, because they oppose thy desires. Be tranquil! reflect! and follow with composure and resignation, the track which thy Father marks out for thy steps! However long it may extend, yet wilt thou be near to the close of thy pilgrimage, and to the explanation of thy whole destiny! Meanwhile submit thyself to the wise and gracious guidance of thy God. Vanquish every dissatisfaction by prayer, every solicitude by faith, and every fear by hope. Yet how is it possible that any fear can arise in thee? The Lord that leads thee is omniscient. He will determine that which is best for thee. He is infinitely kind; he will let thee want nothing that is good. He is through Christ thy propitiated Father: he will neither abandon thee his child, nor neglect thee.

With this consolation I enter once more upon my course. Merciful Father, lead me this day in the even path of duty and right; let thy providence maintain my breath, thy grace regulate my life, and thy Spirit preserve me from iniquity, that I may become worthy of thy favour, and a participator of the blessings which thy beneficence has appointed for me.

JANUARY 13

The manifold Blessings of the Lord from the Womb to the Grave.

When my soul, O Almighty, contemplates the multitude of the blessings with which thou hast loaded me from the first moment of my being, I am at a loss for words wherewith to express the immensity of thy goodness, and the force of my gratitude. The angels themselves are obliged to stand mute, and adore, when they attempt to celebrate the boundlessness of thy love! And how should I, whose loftiest song of praise is but stammering wishes, whose understanding is so confined, whose capacity is so weak, whose life is so short,

how should I be able worthily to extol thee, thou Trinity in Unity.

While yet I slept in my mother's womb thou appointedst to me my life. And when, after this long night, I at length beheld the day, thy hands led me into the world to meet that happiness which was provided for me. I became one of the race of men; and, what augmented my felicity, thou didst then vouchsafe to me the favour of being, through baptism, admitted into the Christian fellowship, and dedicated to thee. Angels stood around my cradle, and at thy command watched me, and blessed my dawning life. On my mother's breast thou already listenedst to my immature desires, and to my broken utterance, formed as yet into no prayer; and thy eye gleamed indulgently on my tears. Thou didst govern my tottering feet, and while I was myself unable to protect my life, thou, O Father, wast the guard of my existence.

As the years of my growing youth increased, so likewise did thy grace towards me increase. How full of forbearance and how patient was thy tenderness when the heedlessness of my age betrayed me into errors! How gently didst thou direct me aright, when I had erred from the line of virtue! And how ready wast thou with assistance, when the blind ardour of juvenile impetuosity had plunged me into dangers, in which I stood in urgent need of thy preserving help! Thou blessedst my bringing up, and the forming of my yet pliant heart. When my parents took thought for my support, it was thou, kind and bountiful Father, that didst sustain me; when they laboured to instruct me, then didst thou open my understanding; when they discoursed to me of the beauty of virtue, then was it thou who enabledst me to love it; when they wished me blessings and prosperity, thou it was that gavest to me felicity and success.

Often was I at the point of death, and thy almighty hand drew me back from the brink of the grave. Often did the wearisomeness of this life force me to tears, and thou sentest me a friend to dry them up and to sweeten my existence. After many a night, in which death lay wait for me in the arms of sleep, hast thou permitted me to behold the morning. And how can I sufficiently praise thee for this present morning, with which thou hast prolonged to me my term of life, renewed its gratifications, and granted to me fresh proofs of

thy protection? Yes, what a blessing is it, that my heart is capable of feeling, and my mind of thinking! This heart must, therefore, in return, be thine perpetually, and remain for ever thankful for thy benefactions. No day shall pass which I live not to thy honour; and my advanced old age, if such thou ordainest to me, shall still proclaim thy truth. I will serve thee all my life long, and boast, while my breath endureth, of thy mercy. In all dangers and troubles will I trust in thee, and even in death, through confidence in thee and my Redeemer, greatly fortify myself. And then will I depart into eternity, there to extol thee with all those whom thou hast elected. Yet eternity itself will be too short to celebrate all thy wonders. So much the more, therefore, will I make it now my constant business to meditate upon the miracles of thy power, and to laud thy name.

JANUARY 14.

The Pleasure and Elevation of Spirit arising from Communion with God.

What a blessed occupation is reverential converse with thee, my Lord and my God! How highly do I feel my spirit elevated above all that is terrestrial!—my heart how strongly fortified and rejoiced, when I pray to thee! How do I exult in the dignity thou hast bestowed upon me, in the faculties with which thou hast gifted me, in the spirit with which thou hast endowed me, when, with sacred confidence and awe, I offer up to thee the wishes and feelings of my bosom! Then does my soul exult that it is able to know thee, to love thee, and to worship thee; then with increased ardency do I experience the delight of daring to call thee Father; then does my heart comfort itself with thy almighty protection and thy wise governance. When I return thanks to thee, O my Lord and my God, that thou hast bestowed upon me a new life and life's gratifications, that I can still gaze upon thy sun, and still magnify thy glory, I feel myself evermore deeply touched with the conviction of thy interminable goodness. Yes, my soul, pay thy vows to the Lord, and forget

not the good which he has done to thee; forget it not even though to-day sorrow and care should afflict thee, though fear and apprehension disquiet thee; forget not, that he whom thou supplicatest grants to thee exceedingly above all that thou entreatest or understandest.

And what shall I ask from thee? God, thou knowest all the necessities both of my soul and my body. Thou knowest the most secret desires of my breast; and from thee my most distant purposes are not hidden. I know not myself what for my own happiness I ought to petition from thee: yet, if I rightly comprehend myself, this is my most earnest wish, that I may find favour before thee, when at any time my sins and my imperfections would excite thy displeasure towards me. For how can I be happy, how can I be content, how can I be comforted, if thou withdrawest from me thy grace? Take all away from me—the prosperity which thou hast conferred upon me, the joys with which thou hast replenished my heart: take away from me my very life, only let me possess thy grace, it will be my happiness, my felicity, and my existence. When I have thee, then do I hold all that my heart can long for. In good fortune I shall find contentment, in mischance consolation and aid, in embarrassment wisdom and counsel, in weakness strength, and under all circumstances joyfulness, if thou be my God and my Helper.

Now, while I stand before thee, thou All-bounteous, I call to mind my fellow-mortals, of whom so many millions perhaps at this moment address to thee their devotions. To them also deign to manifest thy favour; since for them likewise has Jesus won thy grace. O! how many of the oppressed, the suffering, the sick, and the dying, will this morning seek thy countenance! Let them graciously find it, and look down upon them with an eye of pity and compassion. To the least of my brethren, who in his lonely hut prays to thee unseen, vouchsafe thy mercy. Deny it not even to him who is this day regardless of thee, or too proud to bend his knee before thee. Have compassion on the inhabitants of the whole earth, whom Jesus, thy Son, has redeemed. Let this day redound to the salvation of all thy children. This day let the sinner be reformed, the troubled refreshed, the destitute provided for, the sick alleviated, and the dying brought to a blissful end. Henceforward to eter-

nity must the whole world worship thee and adore thy goodness! Lord of Sabaoth! All lands are full of thy glory. My heart must likewise be full of thy holy name. Amen. Hallelujah!

JANUARY 15.

Salvation and Redemption the highest Blessing.

Great are the blessings which God imparts to me in his glorious works of nature, in the joyous destiny of my life, in the success of my labour; but none is greater than that which he has bestowed upon me through Christ—the blessing of sanctification and redemption. How unhappy would be my fate, how desolate my soul, if I had not, illuminated by the light of Christianity, learned thy holy truth, and found the way that leads to celestial existence! Now I know that God will be worshipped only in spirit and in truth, and that his children ought to honour him by sentiments of veneration, by feelings of love and gratitude, through faithful and voluntary obedience. Now I am certain that I can become worthy of his favour and of his blessing only through unfeigned piety and real conscientiousness. Now am I convinced that my soul is immortal, and that heaven is my proper country. Is there any greater benefit than this benefit of revelation, any greater happiness than that of belonging to the redeemed of Jesus Christ? But am I indeed deserving this blessing? Have I in all situations and on all occasions evinced that I belong to Christ? Am I so minded as he, my Saviour, was? Do his disinterested goodness, his invincible fidelity, his pious confidence, and his holy humility, exist in my soul? Ah! with what shame must I confess that I belong not to his true disciples; that I have often sinned against my God by murmurings and impatience, against my brethren by unfriendliness and selfishness, against myself by indolence and negligence; that sensual lusts have often blinded and misled me; and that, when I look back upon my course, I see only the will, but find not the performance of good. O! therefore do I in this hour of morn entreat thee with all earnestness of

soul; bring forth in me, God, a pure heart; grant me a right understanding. Therefore do I vow unto thee, thou arbiter of my life, that I will with the utmost diligence watch over my mind, that I will keep the image of my Redeemer before my eyes in all that I undertake, and in all that I undergo. No longer will I disparage the name of Christian, which I bear, by unchristian sentiments; no longer continue a slave to my passions and desires, and the servant of men, called as I am through Christ to the freedom of the children of God, and purchased by his own dear blood. No longer shall remorse torment me, and an evil conscience embitter my joys. Ah! I now feel how insupportable is the dominion of iniquity; how shameful it is to allow myself to be tyrannized over by pride, by ambition, or the other vices of the flesh. Under this bondage I find no peace for my heart, but perpetual torture and disquietude. Make it appear duly important to me that I am thy child, thy subject, thy property. Give me grace that I may walk worthily of this honour and this happiness, and that I may never deprive myself through my transgressions of this favour. I vow to thee—and do thou grant me strength to fulfil my engagement—I vow to thee to live and die thy property.

JANUARY 16.

God's Will, and not Man's own Counsel, the sure Foundation of Happiness.

With every returning day, new wishes and new designs awaken in my soul; solicitude how I may advance my prosperity, accomplish my desires, and satisfy my inclinations, incessantly occupies my thoughts. Perhaps to-day my first reflection was directed to the means by which I might turn to my advantage the portion of life to which it belongs. I see the folly of these projects. How often already have my schemes been frustrated—and do I not yet know the inutility of all my pains? Why would I longer follow my own idle fancy? I will build my success on God, and not on my own counsel. With this resolution will I begin and live the

day through; and it will much conduce to my real contentment, if the same determination continue always effectual with me. I shall not then experience the vexation which my disappointed views occasion me, nor regard with anxiety and trembling my future destiny, but await it with composure from the providence of God.

Who took care for me, when I lay thoughtless and slumbering on my mother's breast? Who formed so many wise purposes in relation to my future days, while I as yet could scarcely comprehend the present moment? Thou it was, all-wise and benignant God, who, while yet I was not, didst appoint to me my lot, weigh out my sufferings, number my days, and order the entire development of my life. And I would now, though I have already received so many proofs of thy superintending knowledge, distrust thy governance? I would follow my own advice, which is so simple and so unavailing? I would arrogate dominion over the days that are to come, though I am hardly master of the flying minute? I would determine the future, though I am not able to determine the past?

No; to thee, omniscient, benevolent Father, will I leave the regulation of my life and fortune. My proud corrupted heart may strive as much as it can to seduce me into mistrust; through thy grace will I gain the victory over it. I will go in the way which thou prescribest to me, however rough and dark it may be. I will resign myself to thee, however much my weak heart may oppose my submission. All my cares in regard to the future will I commend to thee; and my sole study shall be, how I may be well-pleasing to thee through my whole life: this only shall occupy my soul. Thus will my whole government conspire to my bliss, and to the true welfare of my immortal spirit; I shall be assured that neither the present nor the future can estrange me from thy love.

For this hope do I thank thee, merciful God. O! how tranquilly can I now commence the day! How tranquilly can I meet the future! Maintain and increase this hope in my soul. God, thou knowest my unbelieving and distrustful heart. Vanquish, vanquish, through thy grace, my heart's untowardness, that I may place affiance in thee with my whole soul. Let this alone be my joy, that I cling

to thee and put my confidence in thee. Be my shepherd, my help, and my support, that I fall not. I set my dependence on thy goodness and on thy truth ever and eternally. For thou, O God, hearest my vows; thou rewardest such as fear thy name. And therefore will I always remain with thee, because thou holdest me by the right hand. Thou leadest me according to thy judgment, and wilt at last accept me with honour.

JANUARY 17.

The Christian devotes himself with Thanksgivings to God.

Again, O God, has thy inexpressible goodness prolonged my life to another morning. With a deeply affected heart I adore thy mercy, through which I have been preserved till the present moment. My life was in thy hand while I slumbered during the past night. And thy gracious superintendence alone has removed from me danger and death, and guarded and maintained my existence; for the watchman waketh in vain, if thou keepest not the city. Be then, with grateful heart, devoted to thee that life which is the gift of thy benevolence. Accept from me this offering, which I lay down before the throne of thy omnipotence, and let the thanks please thee which I consecrate to thee at the matin hour. O! how much do I wish, ever-to-be-worshipped God, that my praise might be as ardent, my thanks as loud, and my prayers as full of reverence, as is the devotion of those enlightened spirits that encircle thy seat of majesty! Do thou thyself sanctify my devotion; infuse into it the fire, the vigour, the vivacity, which it wants, and favour me with those blissful feelings, which thou producest in the souls of thy adopted.

O! how little have I hitherto valued the grace which thou hast vouchsafed to me in the progress of my existence! How many mornings have I lived without remembering that I owe each to thy mercy! Often have I arisen from my bed, gifted with new life and new powers; but did I always right seriously reflect that this bed might have been my bed of

death, hadst not thou watched over my safety? I am astonished at my own insensibility; but yet more so at the indescribable immensity of that patience and that longsuffering, which so graciously bear with an ungrateful sinner—and how dared I, how could I longer abuse the indulgent kindness? No; it is my firm resolve, from this day forward, more carefully and more gratefully to regard thy benefits, and to let their magnitude excite me to thy glorification. And when I thus contemplate the multitude of thy benefactions, how greatly must I be amazed at their number! how little and unworthy must I appear to myself! and with what abashment confess to thee that I am undeserving of all the mercy and all the faithfulness which thou exercisest towards me! But in proportion as my gratitude is ardent and sincere, so much the more joyful will be my song of thanksgiving, so much the more zealous my wish to become worthier of thy grace.

Support me in the resolutions which I have formed at the dawn of this day. If thou thyself openest not my eyes to perceive thy mercy, I shall never remark it. If thou inflamest not my heart with gratitude, it will remain cold and unfeeling even under the most visible evidences of thy favour. Therefore do I cry out to thee: grant me a prudent. a thankful heart. O! how many opportunities will this day give me of tasting the fruits of thy friendliness! But they must not be offered to me in vain. In all thy benefits, however small they may be—yet can any thing indeed be small that comes from thee?—in all thy benefits will I acknowledge thee, my benignant, my reconciled Father. This shall be the last morning in which I have been perhaps cold and indifferent towards thee. Every day, every hour, every minute will I remember thee as my kind Benefactor, and on every recollection extol thee.

Yea, I will praise thee, my God, all my life long. I will publish thy mercy, and all the world shall hear from me how compassionate and how gracious thou art to them that seek thee. Only take not away from me thy grace, nor withdraw from me the support of thy Spirit, I will walk before thee this day and be pious. Be thou my protection, my shield, the director of my way, my helper, and hereafter my exceeding great reward.

JANUARY 18.

The Proper Employment of Life

WHEREFORE has God placed me in this world?—This is the great question which I must now put to myself, when I am entering as it were anew into the world. I should act in a manner that I could not answer to myself, were I always to go forward in the path of life, and never disturb myself about what may be the object or the destination of my journey. No: I will stand still at the commencement of this new stage, I will view my road, I will consider the purpose of my existence.

This world is not my true home: the numerous sufferings with which I have here to struggle, the sins to which I am continually subjected, the shortness of my life itself, and my present situation tell me, that I am only a guest, only a pilgrim on the earth. But it is nevertheless thy will, my God, that, during my brief and toilsome residence on this lower sphere, I should live for thy honour and the welfare of my fellow-mortals. It is thy will that I should strive, in all my endeavours, to render life more supportable both to myself and to others, and, through a wise use of the talents which thou hast entrusted to me, promote the happiness of my contemporary sojourners on earth. On these conditions hast thou promised to grant me all that is requisite for the support of my existence; and thou hast also assured me of thy gracious approbation, if I walk in thy way, and employ, like a faithful servant, the talents and possessions which thou hast confided to me. Seriously do I reflect on this wise and benignant dispensation, now that I am on the point of returning to the exercise of that calling to which thou hast appointed me. Merciful God, O! send me the grace to occupy the period of my pilgrimage, and even the smallest part of it, according to thy pleasure. Far be it from me, through supineness or inactivity, to dishonour my profession, or to misemploy the possessions which thou hast delivered to my charge. Let that noble assiduity to advance the good of my brethren and thy glory, that zeal to sacrifice myself for my fellow-mortals, in which I have my Jesus for

a forerunner, be yet visible in me. And if I herein thus uprightly fulfil thy views, O! then out of thy grace vouchsafe to me thy loving providence. Give me my daily bread, and satisfy all those necessities which are essential to my happiness.

But since I have likewise through thy grace received a spirit which is destined for eternity, and for which Jesus Christ by his sufferings has obtained a blessed immortality; O! therefore do I entreat thee most suppliantly, and in the name of my Redeemer, bountiful and gracious God, to teach me to walk worthily of my high calling. Teach me the grand art, the sublime wisdom, to live Christian-like and die happily. Amid all the distractions, in which I may through this life be entangled, let eternity be my aim, that I may so demean myself as becomes a citizen of heaven. Many objects will this day approach my eyes and my heart, which may divert my soul from the consideration of this one thing needful; but then, I pray to thee, do thou so rule it, that it forget not its destination. Grant me grace to profit by the time allotted me, and turn it to my everlasting advantage. Then, let this day occur to me what may, Eternity, to which I always draw nearer, and death, which conveys me to it, will powerfully encourage and strengthen me, and I shall then, in the evening of the day, have no reason to repent that I have lived during it.

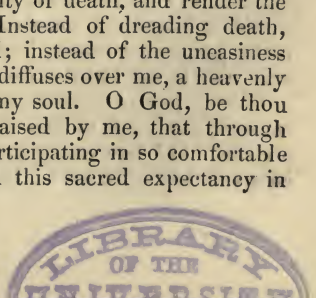
JANUARY 19.

The Fear of Death destroyed.

It is true my eyes are not yet darkened, no fever yet glides through my veins, my knees do not yet shake, I lie not yet extended, pale and senseless, on my death-bed. I still live; I still behold the light; I still enjoy the faculties of my body; I can still move, still breathe, still open my lips, and pour forth to thee my prayer. Thy Almighty goodness, O thou preserver of my life, has permitted me once more to behold another morning: and I praise thee with my whole soul, that I am yet alive, and able to extol thee in the land of the living. But amid all the hilarity of my heart, and the

most lively consciousness of my renovated existence, I cannot suppress the thought that I am frail, null, and mortal. Perhaps I am close upon the extreme limit of my vital career; perhaps this day I shall arrive at it; perhaps this hour, perhaps even before I have finished my supplication, or stammered out to thee my thanksgiving.

I must confess it, my God, this PERHAPS fills me with sad and painful feelings. Am I then ever in danger of losing my life?—always subject to death?—always in expectation of thy judgment and of eternity? Amid all the pleasures that I enjoy, must I also constantly reflect that they are transitory?—amid all my gratifications, that they are uncertain, and of very brief duration? Ah! God, how greatly do these ideas dispirit me! and how hard is it for me to support the lively impression of them with tranquillity! And yet, O God, thou hast placed before my eyes throughout all nature so many objects which present me with perpetual occasion for the contemplation of death. Every thing tells me that I am mortal. The shortness of the days, the leafless trees, the mist, the smoke, each fleeting minute, my own weak, fragile body, and the toll of the death-bell, all these inspire me with the presentiment:—perhaps I must shortly die! And am I still frequently so foolish as to shun this thought, and to deem death, which is so near me, at a distance? O God, teach me to remember that I must die; and take from this recollection the frightfulness which is associated with it. Grant that through faith in my Mediator I may overcome this infirmity, and through the contemplation of heaven, of which I am an heir, sweeten for myself the bitterness of death. For why should this change excite my horror, when I have such consolations to oppose to death? O! let it then be my daily task to endeavour through faith to maintain within me the hope of eternal life. This alone will soften the asperity of death, and render the thought of it pleasing to me. Instead of dreading death, I shall then wish for its arrival; instead of the uneasiness which the consideration of it now diffuses over me, a heavenly joy will spread itself through my soul. O God, be thou supremely, be thou for ever, praised by me, that through Jesus Christ I am capable of participating in so comfortable a hope. Strengthen me through this sacred expectancy in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the progress of my life, under the troubles which may yet accompany me in my course, and under the consideration of my frailty and my speedy dissolution. The nearer I advance to my grave, the more influential let this hope become in my soul. Show thou to me this grace, then shall I be able boldly to proceed onward in the path of my existence, and even in death to praise thee.

JANUARY 20.

Supplication for the Divine Guidance

How indispensable to me is thy support and guidance, my God, that amid so many foibles and seductions I stray not from the road to which, for my happiness, I ought to adhere! I live in a world where even my best works are defective, and my greatest virtues incomplete. I must always strive to become more perfect. Every day that I live I must advance further in the science of godliness, become more courageous in self-denial, more steady in combating against my desires, more determined to overcome the obstacles that obstruct the practice of righteousness. And here I first perceive how very much is yet wanting to my salvation, and how needful to me is the redemption of Jesus, which must compensate for the deficiency of all my efforts, and even preserve me from my destruction. But I have never yet reflected with sufficient earnestness on this grace of my Redeemer; otherwise I should not have been so proud of my good actions, or so careless under my numerous wants. O Lord my Saviour, what were I without thee? What were my virtues if thy Spirit did not operate them within me, and thy merits did not sanctify them? And where would at length my steps carry me, didst thou not, amid so many perplexing errors, bring me back to the true and the only way to my felicity, and likewise keep me in it?

Were I not so forcibly convinced of this, I should have cause at the break of this day to tremble for the sequel of my life. O! how easily may I forfeit the grace which thou hast vouchsafed to me! How easily may the wicked world

and my own corrupted, misled heart, draw me aside from the narrow path in which I must travel to heaven! Yet under all these circumstances my soul tranquillizes itself with the conviction that I am not abandoned to my own powers, but walk under the conduct and superintendence of my God and his Spirit. With this persuasion I again enter joyfully, O Lord, on the course which as a man and a Christian I ought to pursue.

I foresee indeed already to how much temptation I shall this day be exposed, and how strong the contest will be which I have to maintain against the world and my own heart! But if thou, my God, only lead me, I shall escape all the snares, and conquer all the attacks of my enemies. O! therefore, Lord God, withdraw not thy aid from thy poor, helpless child. Discover to me the deceptions that are planned against my virtue, and the mazes that might retard me in my celestial journey. Preserve me that I follow not the seductive voice of the world, nor the propensities of my heart, but give heed alone to thy word and to thy commandment. Guide me in thy truth, and govern me: for thou art the God of my salvation, and in thee doth my soul confide.

Be pleased also to extend this thy conducting goodness to all my brethren, who with me have one faith, one destination, and one hope. Let none be lost, none swerve from the track which thou hast prescribed to us. Have pity on all sinners wandering in darkness, and ever hastening nearer to their perdition. Even when they stand on the edge of the abyss, even then take compassion upon them for Jesus Christ's sake. Confirm thy children in holiness, and fortify them in righteousness, that they may remain true to thee for ever; and finally, when we shall all arrive at the termination of perfection, of rest, and of blessedness. To thy name, three Persons and one God, be adoration, thanks, and honour, now and throughout all eternity.

JANUARY 21.

The Thought of Immortality renders the Transitoriness and Vanity of all Earthly Things undeserving of Regret.

How lamentable is the real appearance of all those things which my heart supposes to constitute felicity; how uncertain and how imperfect are all the gratifications and joys which the world can afford me! Never yet has their possession or indulgence rendered me truly and permanently happy; but on the contrary often forced from me sighs and tears. And this is not my lot alone, it is the lot of all my brethren; throughout the whole earth, from the beggar's hut to the monarch's palace, every situation is full of toil, every bosom full of care, every pleasure fleeting and vain. None of all these apparent advantages can completely satisfy the heart, and preserve it from vexation and repentance. Downcast and discontented, even in the midst of their enjoyment, and under the smiles of the most flourishing prosperity, it feels itself unhappy. The entire globe, with all its magnificence, is to me nothing further than a constant memorial, that this world merits not the love of a spirit born for immortality.

And why should I trouble myself about the transitoriness and vanity of earthly things? If all that I have either to wish or to hope for, were fleeting and perishable; if there were nothing in heaven or on earth that could supply my desires or accomplish my expectations—then indeed I should have cause to complain that God had given to me a soul longing after pure gratifications and real felicity, and yet nowhere able to find them. But the emptiness and the instability which I discover in the world are to me only a pledge that my soul is intended for a better life. My weak, sick body reminds me of my anticipated glorification; my small portion of knowledge, of that wisdom which shall fall to my share in heaven; my temporal combat, of the victory of eternity; my sinful mind, of the holiness which shall yonder adorn me. My whole condition on earth tends to make me sure that I am a citizen of the new Jerusalem.

This high destination ought to gladden my soul. It is

degrading for a spirit which has been formed and redeemed for the enjoyment of eternal felicity to strive after objects which are so changeable, and of such short duration. I will therefore consider my dignity, and aspire at those privileges, which are consonant with my appointment. The pre-eminence of Christianity, the riches of the salvation of Jesus, the joys of immortality, and the life after death—these shall be the scope of my ambition, of my love, and of my hopes. If I knew how to estimate this happiness justly, how despicable would the attractions of sin, and all mundane allurements, appear to me! I will, therefore, amid all the impressions which the vanities of this life may make upon me, constantly remember that I am a subject of the kingdom of heaven, and am bound, in virtue of my allegiance, to renounce the follies of the world, and to labour for the things above.

I shall this day be furnished with many opportunities, both in regard to myself and my fellow-mortals, of remarking the vanity and the transitoriness of human existence. Eternal God, teach me then to make a salutary use of this experience. Turn my soul, which is so much devoted to that which is terrestrial, towards those lasting blessings which Jesus has purchased for me. Let it be my most agreeable duty to strive after heavenly possessions. The vicissitudes of the present I commend to thy faithfulness and wisdom. Be my life as it may, happy or miserable, if it have but a good end I am contented.

JANUARY 22.

Entire Reliance on the Almighty.

O! WHEREFORE should I through unchristian cares and sorrows wrong my God and agonize my own soul? It is true, I know not the accidents and the vexations which may this day attend me. But I know this, that everything that can occur to me depends on the government of a wise and benignant Deity. I know his paternal feelings towards me; I know the love with which he deals with me; I console myself with the compassion which, as from my

Father propitiated through Christ, I dare to expect from him. All my past days would rise up in testimony against me, and reproach me with my mistrust, my folly, and my unthankfulness, if I were to give room to a single doubt in regard to God's gracious providence. All nature would cry out against me: every bird, every insect, every grain of dust, would in scorn hold up to me my unbelief, and heaven and earth would alike stand forth as witnesses to confound me. Great omnipotent Ruler of the World, my Creator, my God, my Father!—No, I will not dishonour thy providence by my over-solicitous anxiety. I will recommend to thee all my cares, and abandon to thee all the necessities that might awake my disquiet. I will be as concernless as an infant in its parent's lap; with tender affection will I look up to thee, and with joyful confidence expect from thee all good.

Beneficent Being, even before this morning dawned, even ere the world and I were yet produced, even then already didst thou think of me, and pre-ordain all the incidents which shall this day arise to me. And that they will be the best and the most profitable for me, of this, the infinite love which thou bearest towards thy creatures, unquestionably convinces me. How should I then do otherwise than give in charge to thee all my ways, and with perfect resignation receive from thee all that thy wise goodness decrees to me? Hast thou for this day appointed to me hours of happiness; I will enjoy them with a thankful heart. Hast thou apportioned to me sufferings; herein also let thy will be done. Hast thou determined my death; even this likewise shall be welcome to me. Do I live in thy communion, do I suffer under thy support, do I die in thy faith, then both my life and my death will unite together for my dearest interest.

Confirm this tenour of thought, O God, in my soul, strengthen in me my reliance on thy goodness and truth through Christ Jesus; and moreover let not my hope waver, when sorrowful events and disappointed expectations would render me dispirited. Show thy grace to the whole world, and manifest thyself to thy worshippers, as a God who is the supporter of, and the provider for, his own people. Give to all that are in misery a consoled and tranquil mind, that deems thy help its sure and only refuge; and release all who call upon thee for assistance.

JANUARY 23.

Praises to God.

Yea, Lord, my God, thou art worthy to receive praise, honour, and thanks! I will praise thee with my songs, and celebrate thy glorious name with hymns, so long as I inhale the vital air. Mighty things hast thou done for me, and in me hast thou magnified the greatness of thy omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness. Praised be thy grace on high!

Praised be thou for the soul with which thou hast ennobled me, which through thy Son's blood thou hast redeemed, and through thy Spirit sanctified. It is capable, O God, of knowing thee and of loving thee; it can comprehend the wisdom and the beauty of thy works; thou hast destined it for a blessed immortality. O, how great, how favoured am I! Therefore be thou eternally praised, O God!

Praised be thou for the body which thou hast bestowed upon me; for the symmetry of my limbs; for the energy of my powers; for the soundness of my senses, for the joys of my life. For this morning, which thou permittest me to survive; for the repose of the night, which has invigorated my frame; for the grace that I am able to worship thee, be thou for ever praised, O God.

Praised be thou for all the proofs of thy goodness which thou hast evinced towards me from the earliest commencement of my existence till the present moment. Thou hast granted me much for the necessities, and for the convenience of my life; many a contented hour, many a tranquil night, many a delightful day, do I owe to thy kindness. Therefore be thou everlastingly praised!

Praised be thou for so many dangers averted, for such frequent rescue, without which I should long since have gone down to destruction. For the protection of thy angels, who have been my companions and guardians; for my agreeable connexion with amiable friends, who constitute my pleasure, my help, and my comfort; for all the means through which thou hast sweetened my life, be thou perpetually praised!

Praised be thou for the troubles which thou hast allotted

to me, and which have rendered me both wiser and humbler, for the consolation which thou hast imparted to me under them, and for the happy issue which thou hast opened to me out of them.

Praised be thou for the joys and gratifications with which thou hast so abundantly enriched me. For every sunbeam that cheers my heart, for every beverage that refreshes me, for every morsel of food that nourishes me, for every cheerful moment, be thou by me incessantly praised.

Thanks be to thee for the blessed hope of eternal life; thanks for the knowledge of thy holy will, which conducts me to heaven.

Praised be thou for the grace that thou disdainest not my thanks, nor rejectest my prayer. Be praised, O Jesus, for thy intercession, which sanctifies my gratitude, and makes my petition acceptable. But where shall I leave off praising thy goodness? O God, I cannot number, I cannot express by words all the instances of thy fatherly kindness. But so long as I live I will boast of thy grace, and prolong in eternity that thanksgiving which I have here so imperfectly begun. I will love thee above all things, serve thee, and keep thee constantly before my eyes and in my heart, I will praise thee for every blessing, however trifling in appearance, and enjoy none without feeling how unworthy I am of it. Thus, in my future life, I shall be able to anticipate new proofs of thy merciful goodness, and always possess thy favour and approbation.

JANUARY 24.

Employment of Time.

This day likewise, which God confers upon me, I ought to employ in my preparation for eternity. And this moment—which already now, almost ere I had observed it, is fled for ever—constitutes a part of that precious irrevocable time, of the rightful use of which I must hereafter give an account to the Judge of the world. And, O God, how does this thought weigh upon my heart, when I review my past life!

I cannot entertain it for an instant without shuddering at my squandered hours, days, and years. Ah! God be gracious to me! Enter not into judgment with me for my neglected time! I cannot render to thee an account of my years, how then shall I do so of my elapsed hours and days? I must stand mute when thou sayest: "Deliver up the reckoning of thy past life." And yet, O God, how uncertain is time! It rests in thy hands. Thou hast only to command, and my body, which is now so active and so full of life, will be deprived of power and motion. Thou needest only abandon me to my own misery, and the vigour of my existence vanishes, and I sink before thee into the grave. Ah! for the sake of my reformation delay my death sentence; still preserve for me this breath; prolong yet the hours of my life; grant me yet a little space, that I may repent of the past, prize the future according to its value, and profit by the present.

The Lord hears thy prayer, my soul! Behold, already again another day that he sends to thee. O! regard it after the estimation of its true worth. But how soon will this day also be gone, even before I am fully aware of its presence! And equally fleeting, equally uncertain, are all the days which I shall yet live. In the midst of the arrangements which I form for futurity, under the strongest feeling of the pleasures of life, in the arms of my friends, in the lap of prosperity, that last moment which bears me into eternity, may surprise me. And the Judge, the holy and the righteous one, will require it back from me! O! that I might during this whole day as seriously reflect on this as I do at present. Lord, do thou teach me: teach me to number my days, and to turn my hours to interest. What will it avail me to have lived for twenty, thirty, or still more years, which have taken their flight from me under the load of sin? But a MINUTE in which I have feared thee—an HOUR, in which I have been busy with thee—a DAY, in which I have become more pious and more useful for the world, will bring me a blessing in eternity. With what joyfulness will this eternity fill my heart, if I can look back without shame on the days which I have spent! But how frightful will be the recollection of the numerous days which I have dissipated and lost! Impress this consideration, O God, deeply on my heart; and let not

its influence quit me throughout the entire day. This is my most zealous and chief desire. May the mercy of God, which inclines me to form this wish, render me also able to accomplish it! And therefore do I cry unto thee, my loving Father, with supplication. Without the support of thy grace, I cannot fulfil any of my longings. My time is at thy disposal; and the power to use it rightly comes from thee alone. Vouchsafe it to me for thy goodness' sake.

JANUARY 25.

Happiness and Advantage of a Holy and Pious Heart.

In the consciousness of having lived before God, lies all the happiness which I can wish for both in heaven and on earth; be this therefore the sole object of all my desires and endeavours. If through thee, my God, I have obtained a pious, satisfied, and faithful heart, then I am rich, then I am great, then I am wise, then I am happy. The whole world may strive after earthly grandeur: I am sufficiently dignified if I am admitted into the friendship of God, and belong to the redeemed of Christ. The covetous may thirst more and more after riches: I am contented if thy beneficent goodness, O God, preserves my life. Those who are ambitious of learning may continue insatiable in their desire of knowledge:—I am wise enough, if I understand and bring into practice the science which teaches me how to live virtuously and die blessedly. All mankind may struggle for titles and honour:—that I am a *Christian*, is for me the most exalted title and the most splendid honour.

And what has hitherto prevented me from thinking thus nobly, and acting thus wisely? O! how often have I sacrificed the glory of Christianity to the vanity of the world—How often—ah God, thou knowest my corrupted heart!—how often have I resolved, when the voice of the passions and of vice should entice me, to despise their invitation, and to follow thy call; and have yet yielded to them! Often was it my firm purpose to remain constantly true to thee; and yet the possessions of the earth needed only to show

themselves, and my determination vanished!—I perceive now how absolutely essential for me are the guidance of thy good Spirit, and the directing influence of thy grace. Therefore do I cry to thee: O! give me a pious and a holy heart, and replenish me with that wisdom which glories in thy favour, and in the redemption of Jesus.

O! the spectacle of the cross of Jesus makes a philosopher and a Christian of me. Here I behold virtue in its plenitude, truth in its strength, the wise man in his exaltation, and the Christian in his grandeur and dignity. This cross of my Redeemer must wave before my eyes, if at any time my heart should become fickle and faithless. And thou who didst suffer for me on this cross, do thou thyself through the force of thy agonies subdue the perverted inclinations of this rebellious heart. May thy love lighten for me the combat against sin! and may my faith in thee enable me to gain the victory over the world!

With so many encouragements, and so much support, I shall be able to pass this day to thy honour. In me shall it be made manifest how much the Christian can effect, whom thou, O God, sustainest, and how happy the man is whom thou favourest. In this render me an example for my brethren, and evince in me that wonderful goodness, thou Saviour of such as put their trust in thee. Guide my steps, that I may arrive at that felicity which is the boundary of all my wishes and all my cares. In everything else do with me according to thy pleasure. If I have thee for my friend, for my support, and for my rescue, all will be easy for me, endurable, and advantageous.

JANUARY 26.

Confession of past Sins, Resolution of Amendment, and a Petition for God's Grace.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not what good he has done for thee! O God, my Creator, I thank thee with gladness for all the mercy which thou hast shown to me in my past life, and especially in the past night. That

during this night I experienced no injury or misfortune, that no terror awoke me, that no sickness attacked me, and that death rushed not upon me; that I still live to-day and enjoy my life, all this I owe to thee, almighty defender of my existence! But am I, likewise, worthy of all the love which thou daily evincest towards me? O! long since had I deserved that thou shouldst chastise me. And yet hast thou still always patiently borne with me. Ah! I am ashamed, long-suffering God, of my unthankfulness, I repent of my transgressions against thee, and this day steadfastly design through thy grace to become more grateful and obedient.

But, O God! do thou qualify me to fulfil my good resolution, and to perform my obligation. Let the thought never be absent from my soul, that thou, the Omnipresent, art everywhere with me, and at all times; so shall I walk before thee in holy fear, so shall I live tranquilly, and when my time is past, be gathered to my forefathers in bliss, and then be able constantly afterwards to appear with joy before the Judge of the quick and the dead.

If I am thus disposed, thou wilt, according to thy gracious promise, go farther with me, and bless me and keep me. This thy blessing and thy protection, I supplicate also for the present day. Instruct me likewise so to direct my conduct, that it may in some degree contribute both to thy glory, and to the benefit of the world. Grant me all that is requisite for the maintenance of my life, and that thou thinkest useful for me. Avert from me all sufferings and misfortunes which are either injurious to me, or beyond my power to bear; but what I must undergo, that help me with patience to support, and happily to overcome. Shed thy pity this day, O my God, over all my fellow Christians. They are all created by thee, all, as I am, ransomed by the blood of Jesus; all, like me, destined for a blessed immortality. O! would that it might go well with them all! Would that all might turn to thee, and be happy for ever! Still view with mercy, indulgent God, those who have hitherto abused thy goodness, and deliver them not over to thy just vengeance. Listen to the desires of all the wretched who shall sigh forth to thee to-day their miseries, and set them free from the evil that afflicts them. Make this day for all my friends a prosperous and propitious day. Mag-

nify thy marvellous goodness throughout the whole world, and let every inhabitant of it, according to his necessities, experience thy grace. Be a shepherd to them that are gone astray, an instructor to the ignorant, a father to the sinner, a champion to the oppressed, a physician to the sick, a comforter to the dying. And this art thou verily, thou all-beneficent Father; thou art so even without our prayers; thou art kind to all, and hast compassion on each of thy creatures.

JANUARY 27.

Effect of the Example and Redemption of the Saviour on the Christian Mind and Conduct.

Yes, when I have thy image before my eyes, thy holy commandment in my heart, when I am devoted to thee, my Saviour, in thankfulness and love, then do I possess strength enough to vanquish the world, and to finish my race with joy, even though the cares and sufferings of life distract me, and my course be toilsome and difficult. When I think of the fidelity with which thou, in the midst of derision and hatred, didst complete the work which thy Father had entrusted to thee, then do I feel new courage to maintain to the end an uninterrupted integrity of profession, in indefatigableness and zeal, even though mankind should reward me with enmity, and many of the upright intentions of my heart remain unperceived. I bear thy name, I know thy promises, and dearly have I been ransomed by thee; how then could I ungratefully abandon the way which thou hast trodden before me, the way that leads to heaven? When I contemplate the constancy with which thou, although thou wast tempted on all sides like ourselves, didst continue true to thy God and to duty until death, and even under the most excruciating death; how can I yield, faint-hearted and fickle, to seduction—how deny thee before the face of my brethren, and be ashamed of thee?—or how can I be still undetermined whether to follow the charms of the world, or thy invitation and my own conscience? No; to thee will I belong, thy pattern will I imitate, as thou wast minded so will

I be. Then will thy Spirit dwell in me; the spirit of truth which the world knoweth not; the spirit of love that maketh strong for good works; the spirit of humility that preserveth from pride; the spirit of faith which cheereth in adversity; the spirit of piety that conducteth to God. This will be the true guide and the mighty protector of my life, keeping me up and supporting me when I stumble, comforting my heart in woe, fortifying my patience in heavy trials, and enlivening my hope.

O! how invaluable is the consolation which thy redemption bestows upon me, thou Saviour of my soul! How sincere is my wish never to forfeit this consolation, but to be worthy the grace of my God! To thee, Divine Intercessor, be my understanding, my will, and my whole life devoted. Let no inclination arise within me, no thought, no wish—let no word escape from me, which may be unworthy of the love wherewith thou hast redeemed me. I can enjoy no benefit that reminds me not of thy expiation, through which all blessings are secured to me. Under the allurements of wickedness restrain me, I beseech thee; under the weakness of my heart strengthen me; and under my sufferings infuse into me fortitude and cheerfulness willingly and submissively to endure them.

Then shall I be able to promise myself thy blessing, and already here receive a foretaste of that felicity which will eternally rejoice me in the presence of God. Yonder I shall perfectly comprehend the infinite worth of thy atonement, and fully gather in all the fruits of it. Yonder I shall praise thee everlastingly for the blessedness which thou hast obtained for me. To this end vouchsafe to me thy aid, gracious, merciful Saviour, to whose name be glory and thanksgiving proclaimed now and for evermore.

JANUARY 28.

The Omnipresence of the Divinity.

I STAND before thy eyes, omnipresent God! What awe seizes my soul, when I bethink myself of thy universal

presence! But at the same time what joy fills my heart, when I consider the happiness which the same confers upon me. I can hence be assured that thou hearest my prayer, and markest the wishes which in this hour of early light I pour out for thy acceptance: and how much honour accrues to me in this, that thou, the God of majesty, thou who art encompassed by the archangels and all the heavens in thy glory, condescendest thyself to dust, and deignest to extend to it thy gracious observance! At this idea my whole bosom glows, O Lord, with sacred reverence and adoration. I prostrate myself before thee. Truly the Lord is in this place: how holy is this spot! Here is nothing else but God's house! Here is the gate of heaven!

O! that I might never forget that thou art every moment present with me as now; that thy eyes, Omniscient, everywhere behold me, and that to thee everything is divulged, however hidden it may be from the world and from myself! Thou therefore must remain the constant subject of my attention; and it must never cease to be my unalterable duty to keep thee in my imagination, and in my heart. I now draw near to the tumult of the world, to intercourse with my brethren, and likewise to those temptations which are in this life to prove, preserve, and purify the piety of thy children. O! that I may, especially in the hours of enticement, have thee, thou reader of the heart, strong in my view, and, fortified with veneration, bravely fight and successfully conquer! Amid all the distractions and perplexities of this earthly abode, let that duty which my calling and my destiny lay charge to my mind, be always present to me.—And when the necessities of life force me to provide for my house, for my body, for my occupation, and for my external condition, let me never fail to have thee in view, through whom all my worldly connexions must be blessed, and all my endeavours prospered.

With a heart thus sincere let me also look up to thee, O Lord, as my preserver and rescuer. So long as I live here, I shall be surrounded by dangers in which I must inevitably perish, if I expect not help and safety from thee. And should I, at any time, be intimidated at the spectacle of such great perils, let those wonders of thy grace which thou performest when thy children are put to trial, be present to my

recollection. Should the multitude of my foes affright me, then must my soul hold in contemplation that mighty aid which places all thy votaries in security from their enemies. And finally, should this make me sad, that thou, O God, often long delayest, ere thou answerest the prayer of thy followers; that so many of my tears, my sighs, and my wishes seem to be lost: O! then must my soul paint to itself that joyous season of salvation, when thou wilt fulfil all that thou hast covenanted.

And thus, should my present life not fully accomplish my desires, I will set thee on all occasions before my eyes as my eternal rewarder. What this world conceals from me, the future world will make evident. What this world teaches me to hope for, the next will bestow upon me. That which in this world I have renounced, I shall recover back a thousand-fold in the world to come. Strengthen thyself, O my soul, through these considerations. Keep the Lord always in view. For he is thy God, thy rescuer, and thy recompenser. He will let no good thing be wanting to them that fear him; but has regard to his household, and will neither forsake them nor forget them.

JANUARY 29.

The Lord great in Counsel and mighty in Deed.

Under the shortness of my views and the weakness of my faculties, it is my strongest consolation that the Lord, in whose management all my interests are placed, is great in counsel and mighty in deed. I know not the fate which is appointed to me either for this day or for this hour; while He who orders and superintends the entire course of things, sees not only the destinies of this day and of this hour, but to him the occurrences of my whole life are obvious and clear. And perplexed as I may often be, to form a determination advantageous to myself, his advice is still more powerful; it instructs me through the voice of my conscience, and helps me out of all embarrassments which occasion me vexation and care. O! why am I frequently

so foolish as to follow the propensities and resolutions of my own foolish heart? Wherefore do I not resign all my deliberations and all my purposes to the infinite intelligence and government of my God, whose decrees alone are great, and wise, and blessed? How much less cause should I have to regret my determinations, were I to submit them all to my Father's wise and propitious will! And with what composure should I look into futurity, if I always remembered that the Lord who rules the future can neither err nor be deceived?

But I will now no longer oppose my own so limited intellect to the boundless wisdom of God, nor my own weakness to his omnipotent sway. Innumerable proofs convince me how full of knowledge, how puissant, and how benevolent the preserver of my existence is. I will not then through my folly detract from his wisdom,—from his universal might through my feebleness—or from his goodness through my unthankfulness. I will humbly reflect on my own meanness, that my heart may ever more impressively feel the greatness of God.

If I live according to the intentions which I now form at the commencement of this day, O! how happy and contented shall I be during the remainder of it! O God, prepare for me this contentment, grant me this happiness. Give me always more and more to know my own ignorance, my own deficiency of understanding, and my own inability. Never must I present myself before thy eyes with a proud and imperious heart; constantly must I regard myself as a weak, helpless, and sinful creature. Only in thee, thou source of wisdom, shall my heart seek counsel and knowledge. From thee only, thou God of strength, will I expect support and assistance. And if I thus sincerely abandon myself to thee and to thy governance, then shall I find in thee both counsel and wisdom. Thou wilt grant to me all the wishes of a heart which, thus pious, satisfied, and devoted to thee, recommends to thee all its ways, and joyfully hopes that thou wilt bring all things to a prosperous issue. Thou wilt endue me with prudence and firmness in all my doubts and difficulties, to discover and choose what is best, and also endow me with force to carry my selection into practice. Let me only, in all that I act, think, or say, observe thy holy will, and in everything comfort myself

consistently with it. Let thy wonderful, glorious counsel bear me happily through all the combats and hardships of life, and bring me at length to that better world, where I shall triumphantly exclaim: THOU GREAT AND STRONG GOD! LORD SABAOTH IS THY NAME; GREAT ART THOU IN COUNSEL, AND MIGHTY IN THY DOINGS!

JANUARY 30.

God's Patience and Indulgence.

WITH what patience, my Lord and my God, dost thou bear with thy weak, thy disobedient children! with what goodness dost thou extend the time of their probation for eternity! Even to me, who have so often abused thy kindness, so manifoldly transgressed against thee, even to me thou sendest a new day of life, a day which I am to employ to the welfare of my soul, and my own amendment. O! what a dear unmerited gift of thy grace is indeed every new day of our existence, and how powerfully does it excite us to live for heaven, and in heaven to collect treasures!

Ah! God, what would have become of me if thou hadst snatched me away in the middle of my course? If thou, when I had mis-spent an hour, hadst immediately required from me an account of it; what would have become of me, if thou hadst changed into death my sleep, to which, void of care, though laden with sin, I had abandoned myself? What would have become of me, if thou hadst cut short my life and my term of grace at the very instant when I was about to revenge myself on my enemy; when I have allowed the sun to go down upon my wrath; when I have been plotting avaricious and uncharitable designs; when I have run headlong in the riot of my lusts, and forgotten death and eternity; when some sickness had attacked me which reduced me to the brink of the grave?—Alas! already had I long inhabited that frightful place where thou torturest with everlasting punishment the despisers of thy much-suffering indulgence.

And what would now become of me, if these riches of the

mercy of God should in the future be locked up from me; if my former unthankfulness and obduracy should induce the Lord to withdraw from me his favour? God of all patience and endurance, cease not to bear with me, and to act upon me. Subdue, through thy grace, my hard and inconstant heart; and do thou thyself bring to nought the obstacles which I erect against the blissful influence of thy Spirit. As thou sparedst David in his iniquities: as thou deniedst not totally to Peter the look of thy grace; and as thou rescuedst Paul from the destruction into which he was hastening—O! so let me likewise experience thy pity. But give me also the grace as sincerely to confess my sins, as earnestly to bewail my failings, and as promptly to obey thy summons, as did these thy cherished friends. This day too, I am assured of it by thy grace and by the intercession of my Jesus, this day too wilt thou through thy goodness incline my soul to thee, and call me back from the path of perdition in which I walk. Grant that I may hear thy voice, and harden not my heart. Graciously regard me, when with assiduousness and zeal I prosecute the work of my reform, when I lay out to proper use the time which thou affordest me; and further lend an ear to my prayer, when full of confidence I supplicate thee for thy assistance. For thou alone producest in me both the will to purpose, and the power to accomplish that which is good.

JANUARY 31.

The constantly renewed Favour and Grace of God the only Source of each Day's Value and Gratification.

What would the present day possess to rejoice me, if I had not the comfortable conviction, that with every new morning the grace of God is also renewed over me? What would my life avail me, or how could I enjoy life itself, if I were unable to continue it under the benignant superintendence of God? And what would the world be without thy indulgence and thy blessing, most gracious Father? To thy mercy alone am I indebted for the happy days of my exist-

ence; it is this that sweetens my pilgrimage, and renders earth and its griefs supportable. With what satisfaction can I now meet the rising of the sun, since with a loud, intelligible voice it publishes to me the renovation of thy favour!

God, my Father, I revere the treasures of thy mercy, and desire nothing more ardently, than that I may praise thy grace with my whole life. Let thy immeasurable goodness especially excite me to serve thee with a pure heart, but let it also instigate me, in pursuance of thy example, to awake anew every morning my tender affection towards my neighbour. Thou forgivest me my misdeeds; let me imitate thee and forgive my brethren. Thou endurest me with forbearance; let me moderate the impatience to which the ingratitude and the follies of my fellow-men so lightly rouse me. Thou providest with infinite kindness for my bliss; let me be as charitably solicitous for the welfare of my mortal associates, and think with heartfelt commiseration on such of them as pass their moments in sorrow and misery.

With what tranquillity and joy should I thus be able in the evening of the day to look back upon the hours which I had just lived, if, blessed by friends and foes, yes, and by thee also, O my God, I could abandon myself to sleep! And how delightful a consolation will the consciousness of a cleansed heart bestow upon me, if I am compelled, such being thy will, to be subjected to afflictions! Then I shall dare to hold myself secure of thy blessing, and hereafter to expect the repetition of thy favour

I finish with the passing day another month. Should I attempt to count the benefits which, during this period, thou hast vouchsafed to me, I should then find them more numerous than the grains of sand on the shores of the ocean! But should I also calculate, in the opposite balance, the trespasses and the faults by which I have rendered myself undeserving of thy goodness, with what remorse should I be obliged to confess that I am not worthy to be called thy child, and to be ranked among the redeemed of Jesus Christ! O God, I humble myself before thee. Pardon, for Jesus' sake, all the sins through which I have offended thee. Let me live this last day to thy glory, and once more experience thy mercy and thy beneficence. May thy

grace work in me that happy disposition through which I may become deserving of thy approbation and thy blessing!

FEBRUARY 1.

Adherence to Jesus.

To cling to Jesus—this is the most important and the most blessed determination which a Christian can form. When we know what Jesus has done for us; when we think what we should have been without him; when we consider the claims which, as a Saviour and Redeemer, he holds on our love and fidelity—what duty can appear less questionable than that which binds us to adore him; to believe in him; and to be his both in life and in death? O! how many sufferings did it cost Jesus to raise us from the servitude of sin to that blessed freedom of the children of God which his participation in our nature grants to us! And shall we not from duty—nay, far more from inclination, render ourselves into his possession? Shall we not love him, though he sacrificed his own life to our good? Shall we not continue true to him, though with inexpressible fidelity he loved us even unto death? No; far be it from us to dishonour his affection by such ingratitude. If we live, let us live to the Lord. If we die, let us die to the Lord. Thus whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. How supremely happy will it make us, if we devote ourselves thus implicitly to our Redeemer; if it become as much our joy as it is our duty to depend upon him, and to obey him! Then shall we find that peace and that tranquillity which the world knows not. Then shall we be able to retain our composure under all the perplexities of life, because we shall be subject to the dominion of a master who is powerful to control all misery and all disquietude. Then, under the consciousness of our frailties, will this thought cheer us:—that Jesus has compassion on our weakness, since he himself has felt and endured human infirmity. Then even under our sins will that curse which he bore for our sakes, that death

the bitterness of which he tasted, and that everlasting atonement which he has accomplished for us, comfort us beyond all utterance. Then finally, in death, will the love with which we were devoted to Jesus, and the faith with which we put our confidence in him, become our surest consolation, and the most efficacious means of strengthening us against the pangs of dissolution. Jesus, my Lord and my God! through thee how happy might I become! Why then do I delay actually to be so? O! let the consideration of thy kindness and of thy sufferings endue me with the disposition to adore thee above all things, and with the strength to rest upon thee, and to live for thee. Let me, with the dawn of this day, renew my purpose to dedicate myself to thee for ever. Be thou my joy, when the lusts of the world conspire to allure me. Be thou my delight, when my heart would incline to the pleasures of sensuality. Be thou the object of my affections, when any unworthy propensity towards that which is of this earth awakes within me. Be thou my wisdom, my strength, my comfort, my hope, and my existence. I shall, perhaps, this day witness many events, and hear many opinions, that may tend to weaken my better resolutions, and to shake my fidelity. Nay, my own heart may draw me aside from thy sacred communion. Grant me, therefore, I beseech thee, courage and fortitude to battle with the enemies of my felicity, and lend me vigour to subdue them. Under all the temptations of sin, under every calamity, and in the hour of death itself, be this my unalterable resolution: —"I will not forsake my Jesus."

FEBRUARY 2.

Alleviation of the Pangs of Death.

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the gentiles, and to be the glory of thy people Israel." (Luke ii. 29.) Under these ravishing excitements of faith died the pious Simeon; and with an equally contented

heart may every Christian die who possesses the same hope and the same belief as this venerable old man. For, what bitterness can there be in death, if I behold in its approach that salvation which Jesus has obtained for me, if I already here feel a foretaste of that felicity which shall make my joy complete in heaven? And, if thus I leave the present world in the certain expectation of finding a better; if I lay aside this body to receive a glorified one; if I sink into the tomb to rise from it again and to be eternally exalted above death and corruption; tell me where then is the frightful form of death itself, or of the grave? Such, however, are the prospects which open to the view of the expiring Christian; such the hopes which indemnify him for the loss of life. I will endeavour beforehand to ingraft these grounds of hope in my heart, and now, while life and health are both my portion, think of the hours when both will be gone. This morning shall remind me of the everlasting morn of the heavenly life: these my renovated faculties shall recall to my contemplation the glorified state into which I am hereafter to enter: this invigorated strength of body shall bring to my remembrance that incorruptible frame which shall fall to my lot in the celestial kingdom. For, O my God, small as is the interval betwixt the morning and the evening, equally brief in comparison is the space that separates life and death. At most, a few remaining steps, and I approach the termination of my course, I reach that dark and joyless vale, at the idea of which even now I cannot help shuddering. Will the vain pleasures, the agreeable societies, or those other gratifications which constitute the immediate objects of my desires, be then able to enliven my feelings? What will there then be to comfort me, except the blessed hope of the resurrection, the salvation which strengthened the dying Simeon, and the assurance of life eternal? These alone will mitigate the anguish of death, and fill my bosom with peace, that, like Paul, I may wish for my latter end, and, like Simeon, bless it. And this blessing for my departing spirit I supplicate from thee, O most merciful Redeemer! Perhaps in my last extremity the pangs of disease, the weakness of my body, and the tears of my surrounding friends, may prevent me from breathing forth to thee the sighings of my soul. Now, therefore, do I call

upon thee, and entreat thee to grant me consolation and refreshment in the hour of death. Thou, O God, thou of a certainty art my help in that final necessity in which death will place me; thou alone beholdest the secret agony of my heart, the last tears which weariness of life and longing after immortality constrain me to shed; thou who hast pity upon me hearest the sighs and groans of my heart—why then should I be afraid? If I may further venture to implore thy grace for this awful season, grant me a joyful mind, a heart filled with such love and confidence towards thee as has often cheered me in the days of health. If my soul repose in thy hands, I shall die happily and in peace.—Lord Jesus! let it now and for ever find rest with thee!

FEBRUARY 3.

The Treasure of a good Conscience.

When I consider the great happiness that is connected with a good conscience, I know nothing on earth which I should more zealously implore from God, or for which, should he grant it to me, I ought more earnestly to thank him. All the joys of this world derive their value originally from a good conscience. The more tranquil my mind is, the more pleasing will be the gratifications of life, the more supportable its disappointments, and even death so much the more gentle. I may possess everything that, according to the judgment of mankind, appertains to a happy and agreeable existence—health, riches, honour, wisdom, and pleasure; but what will health avail me while my heart struggles with doubt and sadness, and is infected by the poison of sin? What will riches, if the tears of the widow and the orphan bedew them, and if an agonized bosom goads me with my iniquities? What will honour serve me, if my soul tells me that I am rejected in the eyes of God? What will understanding, if my heart reproaches me with weakness? What will my very life profit me, if I am compelled to view the past, the present, and the future, with anguish and vexation, and everywhere discover my own wretchedness?

And if too the adversities of this mortal state should overtake me, how insufferable would they appear, since I should be obliged to regard my own transgressions as the cause of them? Lastly, what will become of me in the hour of death, if terror and remorse should follow in the train of the destroyer; if the past should unfold to me my crimes, the present my misery, and the future my punishment?

How unfortunate should I be, if such should ever prove the state of my soul! Preserve, then, my soul, O Lord my God, that it sin not against thee! Let it be my lot to keep a good conscience, and to walk before thee with a pure heart. I shall never have cause to be grieved, if, with a good conscience, I possess the conviction that through Christ I have been reconciled to thee, O my God. I shall not dare to murmur at my fate, when I know and believe that it rests in the hands of the Almighty. I shall enjoy all the pleasures of life, without being tortured by the reflection that I have abused them. In all my calamities this will be my comfort, that I suffer under the providence of God, and that no trouble can separate me from his love. Armed with this faith and with this conviction, I shall conquer the terrors of death; and my dissolution, though it were by nature the most excruciating, will become mild and easy. And lastly, on the coming of the Judge of the world, this good conscience will accompany me to the tribunal of Jesus, and there celebrate its triumph.

O God! vouchsafe me this felicity! Give to me strength in holiness of conscience to imitate the Saviour to whom I belong, who has left me so glorious an example, and who has also purchased me at so high a price. May the grateful remembrance of this truth preserve me from supineness, that I fall not into a slumber of conscience, and grow indifferent to my eternal happiness or misery! Excite me to the performance of good through that peace which is in Christ Jesus the reward of righteousness. Let my wounded conscience be healed through the belief that to thee, my Judge, I am propitiated by the Redeemer. Through steadfast amendment will I seek to render myself worthy of so gracious a blessing.—This promise I make and vow to thee, the Omniscient.

FEBRUARY 4.

The Path of Godliness leads through Toils of short Duration to perpetual Bliss.

How sorrowful is oftentimes my feeble heart, when it feels the difficulties and the exertions which it must take upon itself in striving after holiness! It often then appears to me too hard a task to walk always in the path of virtue, to err in no word, to violate no duty, to leave no good work unfulfilled. How frequently am I thus compelled to sigh over the weakness and the instability of my own heart, and to bewail myself! And yet my Saviour styled it a soft yoke and a gentle burden to follow after him and to be faithful and obedient to his commands. O! then, of a certainty, my will is not yet strong, my zeal not lively, my love of goodness not sufficiently innate and sincere; I do not yet carefully and thankfully employ the means and the incentives to virtue which the Lord bestows upon me through his holy word, through my own conscience, and through the example of my Redeemer. Is it not God also who creates within me both the purpose and the accomplishment of what is good? But my cowardly heart shuns that contest with its wicked lusts, flies that self-denial, through which alone it can become strong and firm, pious and holy. It will renounce no folly, take up no burden. Yet had not Jesus himself to contend with the tempter, to deny himself, and to bear the grievances of life, before he could enter into his glory? From his birth even to his death his existence was full of toil, trouble, and tribulation.—And would not I desire to be like to him in constancy and faithfulness? No, far be it from me to act so basely. I have this day resolved before God to overcome all the obstacles that stand in the way of virtue, to fight manfully against my passions and lusts, and under all circumstances to follow Jesus. I am determined to endure without murmuring all the sufferings which I may this day encounter. The asperities and the unpleasantness of my pilgrimage shall not deter me from going in the road that is prescribed to me. I shall find encouragements enough, if I only perform my duties with uprightness. I recommend my-

self, O God, to thy supporting and holy grace, without which my best resolutions must remain ineffectual. Confirm me in my combat with sin, that I may not be carried away by the principles and the pattern of the ungodly. Give me the wisdom not to allow myself to be enchained by the fair form which the vices deceitfully assume, or captivated by the charms of sensual enjoyment. Let me proceed with fortitude in the way of godliness, and through unmovable fidelity attain the goal of all my endeavours, the end of all my toils. With what satisfaction shall I then look back upon all the hardships which I surmounted! How thoroughly shall I be convinced, that the narrow way, by which I journeyed, has been for me the road to eternal life! With what fervour shall I for ever thank thee, O my God, that of thy infinite mercy, it has pleased thee to guide me, in this perfect path, to the enjoyment of complete and endless felicity!

FEBRUARY 5.

God the Christian's Protector and Guide.

YES, truly it is my sweetest consolation and my highest happiness, that I walk under the providence of a gracious and infinitely powerful God; and it shall always continue my joy to abide by him and to put my confidence in him. Why should I scorn my own welfare, and place my trust in creatures as frail and as foolish as myself? No: the Lord is my deliverer, the Lord is my teacher, the Lord is my guide, the Lord is my keeper.

The Lord is my protector: his infinite goodness sees all the dangers to which my life is exposed; his might can defend me in every difficulty, even in my utmost need; his goodness is constantly inclined to uphold and to save me. Never yet has the Lord left himself without a witness in me. Where no man could help me, there was his aid nigh; where no man heeded my complaints, there did he hear the voice of my supplications and my tears. For the future, therefore, on him must my whole soul rely, and on him only rest its hope. So long as I live I shall be surrounded by numerous

perils. Nay, who knows what may even this day await me? I now abandon myself, O God, to thy all-wise and omnipotent protection. Disclose to me, I implore thee, the dangers which I am perhaps approaching, and snatch me with a strong arm out of my difficulties. In my ignorance this is my consolation, that the Lord himself is my teacher to instruct me in the most important of all knowledge—the fear of God. Merciful Deity, I give up my heart to thee, that thou mayest fashion it; my understanding, that thou mayest enlighten it; my will, that thou mayest sanctify it; and my entire spirit, that thou mayest keep it blameless till the day of thy coming. But I, weak and stumbling child that I am, see before me so many stray paths that may lead me away from thee; so many windings in which I may entangle myself! O! be thou then my leader, and conduct me in the even path. Discover to me all the mazes in which I may wander to my destruction; and guard my steps that they fail not. How greatly do I rejoice in the belief, that thou art powerful in my weakness, and that thy grace guides me in all truth!

Let thy eye, most bountiful God, look down upon me this day with compassion. Thou hast brought me into the world, now also, I beseech thee, accompany me through it with thy providence. Turn not thy countenance from me when I entreat thee, and grant to me, for the sake of Jesus my Saviour, all that it befits me to possess. Even should sorrows be my portion, I will accept them with cheerfulness: only do thou strengthen me with thy assistance, and gladden my heart with thy consolation. To thy good governance I resign my whole life: thou carriest me over a smooth road, and whatever thou doest is well done, is profitable for me, and effectual towards the purifying and hallowing of my heart.

FEBRUARY 6.

The Word of God.

Adored for ever be thou, O God, for the word which thou hast given to me! What could indeed constitute my conso-

lation in this world, if it were not thy word? What could cheer me amid the transitoriness of life, and the frailty of all earthly things, if I had not the testimonies that shall remain, though even the heavens and the earth should pass away? I thank thee, my God, with heartfelt emotion, for this gift. I see how the world with all its lusts disappears, and how all things draw to an end. But thy word endures for evermore, and therefore do I put my trust in thy holy name.—My whole soul rejoices in thy salvation, and my heart exults in the vast hopes which my faith affords me.

O God, I am here a pilgrim and a stranger. Great are the temptations to sin which encompass me on every side: and how often is my heart charmed and seduced by its own evil desires! How often do I allow myself to be carried away by this corrupted heart, and reflect not on my vow and my obligations! Let the convictions of thy word, and the support of thy Spirit come to the aid of my incredulity of mind. In the blindness and feebleness of my understanding, thy word must illuminate and instruct me; and amid the false ways that bewilder me, thy testimony must keep me in the right path to everlasting life. Take not, therefore, I entreat thee, thy word from my mouth, nor the comfort of thy gospel from my bosom. Instruct me in the way of thy commandments, and guide me in thy truth. Teach me to act according to thy pleasure, and let thy good Spirit lead me in the plain road. This morning arise to my remembrance the many wretched beings who long after thy word, and yet are not refreshed by it. O Lord! have mercy upon them, and let thy light shine in their darkness! Chastise not the despisers of thy word as they deserve, nor recompense the scoffers according to thy justice. Still work in them their amendment. Perhaps they will come to reason; perhaps they will still acknowledge thee and thy Son Jesus in death's last anguish. Be not terrible to them, have pity upon them, O Father. Alas: they know not what they do. But, hark: they cry to thee, O God, out of the depths: give ear to them; redeem them, absolve them, most merciful Lord!

Listen to me also, and to me show thy slowness to anger. So many years as thou hast permitted the lustre of thy word to beam upon me, still I have not yet become more pious, more wise, or more upright. Ah, enter not into judgment

with me! Yet this day grant me thy grace, yet this day give me again respite for repentance. Let thy gracious Spirit incline me to receive thy word, and endow me with power to walk worthily of it. Especially in the last hour of my life, let thy word be my comfort, that I may not depart in misery. Lord, let my supplications come before thee. Instruct and save me according to thy Scriptures. Yes, I trust in thy promises:—Thou wilt not leave thy ignorant child without instruction, or thy tottering child without support, or thy afflicted child without comfort.

FEBRUARY 7.

God's Mercy and Protection displayed in the Hours of Darkness.

And shall I be indolent, shall I be slow to praise my God, when all nature glorifies him? No: awake, my soul, to laud thy Creator and Benefactor; be active and ready to perform the duties which this new day demands from thee. Bethink thee of the favour which God has vouchsafed to thee during the past night. His omnipotence protected thee, and his goodness watched over thy life, that no harm might approach thee. I lay down yonder close to death, and the Lord put death away from me. O God! I shudder when I reflect what would have become of me, if these my eyes had then been closed for ever. Alas! even now should I have been in that most direful abode, where thou punishest to all eternity the scorners of thy longsuffering patience. With a deeply affected and most thankful heart, do I acknowledge thy unspeakable forbearance, indulgent Father. No creature in the whole range of the universe has so much to thank thee for as I; and hence my gratitude ought not to be surpassed in ardour and sincerity. But where shall I find words to praise thee for the benefits of one single night? Innumerable are the proofs of thy goodness, O Lord, so that I cannot even name them; but I will extol them as long as there is breath in me.

But how ineffectual will my purpose be, if thou lend me not grace to fulfil it! I foresee how greatly the distractions

of this day will prevent me from thinking of thee and honouring thee in all my doings. And perhaps, to my shame must I confess it, my heart will even in the next hour be lukewarm and insensible, and unmindful of thee! But should I be thus so unhappy as to forget thee, do thou, I implore thee, quicken my heart, and rouse my soul, that it may start from its slumber. Grant that I may every moment reflect, that it is through thee that I exist, and let me regard each day as a new gift of thy free grace. Place in lively colours continually before my eyes those obligations by which I am bound to glorify and serve thee with all my heart. Let the immeasurable love which thou evincest to me, excite me to adore thee in return, and out of affection for thee to renounce ungodliness; and let that inexpressible compassion, in which, through Jesus, I participate, animate me to live and die for him, my Redeemer.

O! what joy, what blessedness will this day bestow upon me, if I live throughout it in this manner! How light will be all the disappointments which thou mayest doom to me, appear, if I hold fast the conviction that thou, O God, art my Father, and my friend. How void of care shall I be able to rest under all the calamities of this present life! And what felicity will await me in that better life which is to come! Far must it be from me to rob myself of this blessedness. O God! make it my chief solicitude to become well pleasing to thee! Convince me more and more, that, except thee and thy grace, nothing can render me truly happy. And according to this assurance grant also that I may act, valuing little all the pleasures of the world, and only aspiring at those above, where Christ is. Thou alone, in life and in death, in joy and in pain, and in all things, shall be glorified by me, now, henceforth, and for ever.

FEBRUARY 8.

God the best Friend.

Among the sweets of friendship and social love, which render the toil we undergo and the enmity we encounter in the

world supportable, certain disagreeable feelings constantly mix, which remind us, that on this earth no pure and perfect joy is to be found. Here, where the most sacred obligations are violated by fickleness and infidelity; here, where true and disinterested affection is so rare; here, where, with the most sincere inclination, we want the means to render those we esteem happy; here, where death dissolves the most intimate connexions, and severs the firmest ties;—here no complete friendship is to be expected. But how consolatory is it, under the inconstancy and insufficiency of all earthly unions, to have a friend whose truth is unalterable, whose sincerity is infallible, whose power is unlimited, and whose love is of everlasting duration!

O God, my Father, in thee I have such a friend, and with this reflection will I console myself, when I see that my worldly friends turn away from me. I flee to thee, and desire nothing more earnestly than that thy love may sweeten for me the world's want of affection. If thou only art my friend, the unfaithfulness of my mortal friends will be to me indeed very indifferent, and I shall find in thee more than abundant compensation for their loss. Vouchsafe to me thy love, on which, as thy creature, and one of the redeemed of Christ, I dare to assert a claim; and I solemnly promise that I will in return love thee with my whole heart and my whole soul. O! what an inimitable pattern of philanthropy dost thou in thyself present to me! Grant me the power to form myself according to it, and to keep perpetually in view that love which thy Son, my Redeemer, exercised in his conduct on earth. Who ever like him preached, both through precept and example, that undefiled love which assimilates us to thee, thou God of benevolence, and renders us deserving of thy choicest blessings? Did he not go about doing good? Were not the sufferings, the punishments to which he submitted, and all his undertakings, pure love and charity? When did mankind ever possess such a friend as he was?

All-loving Redeemer, inflame my cold heart, soften my hardened soul. Let thy love instigate me to hold my brethren as dear as thou didst; to be as compassionate as thou wast towards the unfortunate; to suffer with composure equal to thine the hatred of the world; to be as active as thou for the welfare of my fellow-creatures, and to love them

as sincerely, as steadfastly, as generously, and as uprightly. Then will this disposition cheer me under all the crosses and vexations of the world, since of thy affection I shall be able always to assure myself: then, as I may have comforted the distressed, wilt thou in my distress encourage me; as I have been the friend of thy redeemed in their sorrow, so then wilt thou be my friend; and then also wilt thou in thy mercy exalt me to the most perfect felicity of friendship in heaven, as I have striven through my weak services thither to conduct my brethren. Thus wilt thou grant me to feel the full salvation of love, and I, even I shall in thy love be blessed to eternity.

FEBRUARY 9.

The Christian expresses his sure Persuasion of the Ground-work of his Hope and Faith.

I KNOW on what ground I build my happiness, and who he is whom I worship, and in whom I put my trust. Did I not bear about with me this persuasion in my heart, I must loathe each returning morning, and lament that God had placed me in the world. Such wretched uncertainty would render my life hateful to me, my lot here below unsupportable, and death most frightful. Everything on earth would appear to me dark and mysterious, and my own destination would remain a secret to me. I should live without comprehending the object of my life; I should die without knowing wherefore I endured death. In brief, I should be, among all creatures, the one most deserving of pity. But, thanks be to thy revelation, O God, which has liberated me from this torturing suspense, and has helped me to a tranquillizing conviction. Now I know my appointment, my worth, and my end.

I know on what foundation I ought to erect my happiness, that it may neither be shaken nor destroyed. I know the God who has written his commandments in my heart, and in whom I establish my confidence. I enjoy the present without vexation, and await the future without dread; for I know who he is in whom I trust, and am sure that, alike

through joys and woes, he leads me to his heavenly mansion In this assurance, I advance with comfort to meet my destiny. How is it possible that that destiny can be evil, since the God, in whose hands it rests, is so good, so wise, and so powerful? How can anything happen to the prejudice of my real happiness, since Jesus himself suffered and died to make my felicity certain and complete? How can I doubt of the love of God, when his love towards me moved him to deliver up for me his own Son unto death? Now I know, to my peace, that in God I am everlastingly blessed; and to confirm and strengthen myself in this idea, shall be henceforward my chief business and my daily effort. I will always study how better to understand the highness and the importance of my calling, how to penetrate always into the knowledge of the love of Jesus, how to resign myself contentedly to the guiding of the Lord, and always with augmented faith regard my Saviour and my God.

Would that this very day might produce within me these saving operations! Never will I henceforth fail in opportunities of strengthening myself in my belief, and in my hope. To-day, as heretofore, the goodness of the Lord will magnify itself even in me. O! may each wise dispensation of my God confirm me in love and affiance towards him, the Holy One and the Good! This is my morning supplication: grant me, O God, a heart heedful of thy ways, and that I may walk in the same with obedience and willingness. In the firm conviction that I am of thy household, and have an expectancy in the inheritance which is laid up in heaven let me in all, even the most afflicting events, acknowledge thy wisdom, and continue devoted to thee. With these sentiments let me die, and evince by my death how contented and happy the Christian is, who stands in the faith of Jesus, and under the assurance of the grace of God.

FEBRUARY 10.

All that Man possesses is the Gift of the Omnipotent.

Universal Benefactor of mankind! never can I sufficiently extol thee, when I consider the kindness which thy favour

has shown to me. To discover the infinity of thy goodness, I need neither look up to the heavens nor contemplate the earth. I have only to turn my eyes upon myself, and I behold wonders without end, and benefits without number. All that I am, and all that I possess, is thy gift: all the advantages which exalt me so exceedingly above others of thy creatures, and raise me to thy resemblance, hast thou granted to me. All the days of my past existence are the boon of thy mercy; and this life, this morning accorded to me anew, this breath, this soul that thinks of thee, this heart that loves thee, all, all are the effects, gracious Father, of thy inexpressible benevolence. I should deserve that thou shouldst withdraw from me even the least of thy blessings, if I were not ready to acknowledge their immensity. I should not deserve this body, if I did not use it to thy glorification; nor this soul, if I did not sanctify it to thee; nor this life, if I did not devote it to thee. Neither can I help being filled with astonishment, when I consider the patience with which thou daily multipliest the proofs of thy bountifulness. Little as, on account of my sins, my ingratitude, and my insensibility, I deserve that thou shouldst deign to favour me with thy grace, thou never ceasest to load me with fresh benefactions. I heap up my iniquities, thou redoublest the evidences of thy longsuffering forbearance; I increase my unthankfulness, and thou augmentest thy favours; I work my own misery, thou promotest my felicity; I forget thee, and thou rememberest me; I flee from thee, and thou comest nigh to me!—O Lord, who is there like to thee? Who is there so gracious, so considerate, so patient, so indulgent as thou art?

And shall I longer squander the riches of thy goodness? Shall I commence this day with the same ingratitude with which I closed the preceding? No; I have long enough abused thy patience, and thy parental gifts. The present day awakens me to new—to better feelings, and to those determinations which such high obligations demand from me. Behold, O Lord, and God of my life, I dedicate to thee in this hour of morn, all that thou hast bestowed upon me. I devote myself with pure affection to thy wise and sacred views. My body and my soul shall praise thee: my whole

existence shall proclaim thy grace. And may a holy inclination inspire my heart to benefit my brethren also, to be useful to them with that which thou hast granted to me, and in all things to demean myself as a prudent and faithful steward! My heart and my hand must be shut to none of the wretched who anticipate from me pity and assistance. Be it my utmost joy, my pride, and my glory to imitate thee, O All-beneficent; and to those whom thou hast allotted to my care, to every unfortunate being whom thou bringest to me, to become the instrument of thy goodness. Thus I shall not have reason to be afraid when thou exactest the account of the employment of thy munificence. I shall be blessed by my friends, prized by my enemies, and hereafter eternally recompensed by thee.

FEBRUARY 11.

Watchfulness of the Heart.

How secure and careless is my weak heart amid the temptations which on all sides besiege it round about; amid the enticements to sin which encircle it, and threaten its repose! And how often has this carelessness involved me in dangers and errors, how often has it been the occasion of my downfal! Henceforward, however, I will watch and pray, that I sink not again in the contest; for truly my spirit is willing, but how weak is my flesh! Yet, alas! how often already have I made this blessed resolution without carrying it into practice! How often has all that I did been to form a fair purpose, while I thought not how I should fulfil it! How many days have I solemnly consecrated to God at their dawning, and yet, in the evening of them, seen that they had been sacrificed to the world and to sin! How many good inclinations, awakened within me at the appearance of the morning sun, have remained powerless, and even vanished, when I quitted my solitude! And perhaps my resolutions of to-day will be equally fleeting and impotent! Perhaps even by the next hour the pious feelings which I now experience will be extinguished! Again, perhaps, I am about

to rush headlong into the cares and pleasures of the world, and forget the Lord to whom I have vowed myself!

Yes, so fickle is my heart, so easy to be misled! and therefore so needful is it for me always to watch, always to combat my passions, and always, through prayer, to sanctify and confirm every godly impulse of my mind. I must continually be on my guard, and most attentively take heed of my heart, lest any desire steal into me unobserved that may enervate all my precaution.—And O! how shall I, a weak and helpless mortal, with all my circumspection be strong enough to preserve myself in virtue? I am like a voyager who sees himself exposed on the ocean to the danger of being wrecked and sunk, if there come not to him instant aid.—And who, who can place me in security from so many tempests of seduction, and pilot me into a safe haven, if thou dost it not? Thou, even thou, most merciful Father, must to this end send me thy grace. Thou must defend my heart, and assist me to vanquish all the lusts which are perpetually springing up in it. O! do thou thyself preserve me from that pride and corruption of soul through which I have already been so often rendered miserable. Again even now the distractions of this life encompass me. Let my heart then be ever raised up to thee in holy awe, that I may not be so far entangled in the pleasures and concerns of the world as to neglect thee. How many snares will be laid to-day for my virtue. But do thou discover them to me, and permit me not to fall into them. Never let the attractions of this earth have so much influence over me as to allure me from the narrow way that leads to heaven, but incline my heart to those better durable possessions which thou hast laid up for me above. Let me incessantly watch over my heart, and stand in constant readiness, that when thou callest me out of the world, I may be prepared to enter into that celestial dwelling where no one shall have the power to rob me of my innocence and my happiness.

FEBRUARY 12.

Self-Meditation, and the Knowledge of the Final Destination of the Soul.

Long as I have lived in the world, I have never yet reflected right earnestly on my destination, nor answered to myself according to truth the important question: Wherefore has God granted me life with its benefits, and a spirit with its powers and faculties? But I will now no longer neglect this consideration, I will devote this hour of the early day maturely to contemplate my being, my vocation, and my appointment.

What can be more joyful to me under this retrospection than the thought that I am a work and a miracle of divine omnipotence. This frame, that displays so much art and skill in its construction, with its fine, its nicely disposed members, is one of the gifts of my Creator. It is his skill and ordering that regulate the wonderful circulation of the blood through my limbs, which preserves my existence, and shall never cease till the Lord commands my heart to beat no more, and this fluid to congeal in my veins, and my lungs no longer to respire. But what is that by which I am able to conceive all this, to know my Creator, to admire his wisdom, to wonder at his omnipotence, and to revere his goodness? It is not this frail body that thinks and desires, that possesses feelings and affections; no, this is only the dwelling of that spirit within me which reasons which exalts me to the Creator, which teaches me to distinguish good from evil, and gives me the power to will and to perform what is virtuous.

But do I indeed avail myself of this ability? Do I steadfastly purpose that which is good? Do I really shun that which is the contrary? Ah! to what shame do these interrogations put me! With how much grief am I forced to confess, that my will is in nothing either so pious or so good as it ought to be; that my desires are directed to iniquity; that my propensities drag me into sin! Unmindful of my Christian dignity, my appointment, and the account which I must one day render to God, I yield myself up to my passions and to

foolishness; I let my heart dote on the perishable treasures of the earth, and dissipate that valuable time which I ought to lay out with wisdom. Can I even by the most sincere and inward repentance repair the evil which I have committed? Where then shall I find repose for my soul? I can find it only in the belief that I belong to Jesus: this faith encourages me, and renders me tranquil. I am by the force of this privilege a being of great and certain hope and of endless felicity; one redeemed through Christ, to a better and eternal life in heaven, and here already a child and favourite of the everlasting God. Of these high advantages I will endeavour to become ever more and more deserving through pious zeal for the honour of the Lord, for the good of my fellow-creatures, and for the salvation of my immortal soul; through well doing without weariness, and through humble submission to the will of the Almighty. Thus will my memory go down to posterity loaded with blessings, and I shall be applauded by my brethren as a benefactor of mankind. Thus also shall I be happy in eternity; and when he who has been here nothing, and yet fancied himself to be everything, enters, stripped of all his boasted splendour, into an eternity of misery, I shall be rendered manifest in glory to the whole creation.

FEBRUARY 13.

Danger of Procrastination in the Path to Heaven.

If I be on the way to heaven, and shall there reap what I sow here, O! how foolish, and how culpable is any procrastination of my most important earthly business, the amendment of my heart! Shall I, like so many of my fellow-men, approach with carelessness and levity to the hour that bears me to my everlasting Judge? If so, O! then like them I shall be snatched away in the midst of my thoughtless security, and too late in the moment of death repent of my negligence. And have I not indeed solely to thank the patience of the Lord, that this has not already taken place? At last I perceive the danger into which I shall plunge my-

self, if I delay yet one single day, one hour to chasten my heart, and collect treasures for heaven: now stands my determination firm; no longer will I yield to the sinful inclinations and propensities of my breast, no longer slight the opportunities afforded me of doing good, and fulfilling the views of God. For how can I, who am a frail mortal, reckon on a long series of years? and even, if I dared to do so, how could I answer it to God, for having lost only one short hour of the period of preparation for the celestial realms which is here allowed to me? How often, already, has the Almighty called me to repentance, and I have not listened to his voice, but hardened my heart against the warnings of my conscience. No longer, however, am I rash enough to act in so unjustifiable a manner: no longer will I scorn the salvation which is offered to my soul. May not death appear without a messenger to announce that he is at hand, and carry me out of the world ere through any bodily pains I have been induced to anticipate his arrival? Whence then know I that God will let me still hear that voice which I have so frequently contemned? And how can I hope that the Holy Ghost will again knock at the gates of my heart, after I have so many times, without number, refused him admittance?

In this hour of dawn will I listen to the voice of God. Who knows whether in the evening of the passing day I shall not hear that frightful sentence: "Mortal, thou must die!" I will already, therefore, regard myself as a dying man, and what I would in that state do on my death-bed, I will now perform in the season of health. Now will I humble myself before God, and lay hold of that righteousness which must hereafter prove my comfort in death. Now will I commend my spirit into the hands of the Lord. Now will I combat my lusts, the contest with which in the agonies of mortality would so embitter my last moments. And, O God, thou who teachest me this wisdom, grant me also the power to practise it. Instruct me how to employ my time, to the utmost profit, and remind me continually of the high value yet transitoriness of my life, to the end that I may live according to thy pleasure.

FEBRUARY 14.

Wisdom and Understanding, not Wealth and Superfluity, the proper Objects of Prayer.

THAT frame of mind which prompts us to prefer the grace of God to the wealth of the world, and the knowledge of God to all earthly possessions, embraces those sentiments which can alone elevate us to true dignity, and secure for us the ecstasies of heaven. We are not born to amass riches, to pile treasures upon treasures, and, through such vain baubles, to purchase the applause of the multitude. That Christianity which we profess, proffers to us wealth more complete, and a far nobler exaltation;—to choose this is wisdom; it is greatness; it is felicity. And wherefore then should I covet affluence? A loan so transitory, so disquieting, so seductive, and so little in reality what it appears to be, deserves not the regard of a Christian who is invited to the attainment of an estate that is everlasting. I will not pray for superfluity, and the treasures of the earth. Overabundance might too easily render me unhappy, and deprive me of the peace and the innocence of my heart. Why should I pray for objects which make life so full of care,—the breast so uneasy, afflictions so insufferable, and death so bitter? How easily might I forget God, if once in my prosperity I should indulge agreeable prospects and smiling hopes! How easily also might that indifference and want of compassion which accompany fortune, master my soul, and my property become accursed to me through the sighs of the desolate and the oppressed! No; I will not then supplicate the Lord for affluence. I will follow the wisdom of Solomon. My prayer shall be: "Lord, grant to me, thy servant, an understanding heart!"

If I obtain this heart, how rich, how great, how happy shall I be! Then shall I have no cause to envy those who spend their days in plenty and in pleasure. The consciousness of a wise and pious mind will indemnify me for all things else: and while one man loses his accumulations by fire, another by the subtlety of his neighbour, I shall be secure enough from every disaster of this description. No

one can take away from me the riches of my soul. Yea, even death, that makes a beggar of the most opulent, shall increase my stores, and bestow upon me a splendour in comparison with which all mundane glory is mere poverty.—O God, thou fountain of all bliss, grant me this grace for which I would gladly barter every gift besides. To thee, to thee thyself, O God, be my best interest an object of care; and that which thy hand castest to me, however small, however trivial it may seem, shall be for me sufficient, if thou only accompany it with a tranquil and a placid bosom.

The world may still thirst after riches! Fill thou my soul with thy wisdom and with thy love, so shall I be wholly indifferent at the spectacle of every species of wealth, so shall even penury, if thou appoint it to me, be acceptable and light to endure. Make it my daily endeavour only to strive after those acquisitions which my Redeemer has obtained for me, and which are reserved for me in heaven.

FEBRUARY 15.

The Sleep of the Body compared to the Torpor of the Soul, with an Invocation to the Spirit to awake from Slumber.

Without sense, without animation, without heed either of myself, or of the dangers that might approach me, lay my body in the past night abandoned to sleep. O! how melancholy an image is this state of that inertness to which my soul is reduced! I am insensible to so many of the benefits of my God, and void of feeling under so many of his fatherly corrections! My love towards that which is good is dead; and, careless of the dangers and obstacles that oppose my virtue, how often do I fall headlong into temptation! Like a slumberer and a dreamer I proceed onwards, thoughtless of what awaits me, and unsolicitous about the welfare of my deathless spirit. In this manner have I already passed so many days—dosed away so many years! Then is it time that I should awake from my lethargy, and consider the call which this morning makes to me.

Now is it the hour to rise up from repose: all nature once

more revives; all is in activity, everything feels itself gifted with new energy and new life. My soul, arouse thyself also, and relapse not again into drowsiness. Is it Christian-like to have wasted life's best years in idle visions? Be at last watchful and alert to exercise the duties which thy God demands from thee. How often, already, in the first hours of the new-born day, has the Lord cried out to thee: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead!" This morning hear thou his voice, and be attentive to the words which invite thee to existence. Behold, with what perils thou art surrounded, and those into which thy indolence and thy supineness may speedily plunge thee. Every day challenges thee to a fresh combat. Up! up! and fight, that thou mayest not lose thy crown. Alas! how will thy listless years then torture thee, if thou become for the first time awake, when the torpor of death darkens the balls of sight! Think of this and tremble! But how can I awake, if thou, O God, openest not my eyes? As it is thou that must give my body the power to shake off its heaviness, so must I receive likewise from thee the strength to awake out of that oblivion into which my sins have lulled me. Have mercy upon me: for, ah! I am still dull, still slothful, still inactive in goodness. Invigorate my heart, inspire my soul, that I may wisely employ the immediate hours which thou grantest to me. Make me to consider my own wretchedness, and thy compassion, to be zealous in the exercise of virtue, and careful to avail myself of all the opportunities which thou for my salvation vouchsafest to me. To-day also wilt thou be busy with my heart. Thy word, thy benefits, thy chastisements, thy patience, thy forbearance, will this day, as heretofore, guide me to repentance, and earnestly do I purpose to oppose not with contumacy thy invitations, to frustrate not thy mercy. Yet, should I be so unfortunate as to sink again into slumber; let thy strong arm grasp me, that I fall not asleep in eternal death, but find life through Jesus, my Redeemer.

FEBRUARY 16.

The Dedication of the Heart to Christ.

What intention can be more meritorious, or more requisite, than that determination which I am now forming in this hour of approaching day — to be wholly and solely devoted to Christ? It is equally my obligation and my happiness to live and to die to Jesus, my Redeemer. O! how strongly has he, both through his life and through his death, bound me in duty to thankfulness and adoration! What greater effort could he make to render my heart entirely his own, than that which he evinced in the works which for my sake he performed? Could he to effect my everlasting felicity have undergone more cruel sufferings, or endured a more ignominious and more painful death? Could he give me any higher proof of his affection than he has manifested to me in this, that for my special welfare he exchanged glory for contempt, perfect happiness for misery, the riches of heaven for the indigence of an earthly existence, and life itself for death? How hard, how inhuman, how barbarous, must that breast be, which feels not the ardour of mutual regard in return for such instances of the most tender fidelity! No; loving Jesus, too immense are thy blessings, too precious thy gifts, that I should shut my heart against thy commandment and thy call; and thus ungratefully contemn the aid which thou offerest to me in order that I may become holy and blessed. Would it be possible that my soul should have joy in this life, if it were not governed by thy Spirit, and through faith in thee confirmed and comforted? No; I can be happy only inasmuch as I belong to thee, as I continue thy true disciple, and follow thy footsteps. For the misfortune and the curse of sin reach not thy votaries; they are not the slaves of the passions; they shrink not, when they are doomed to suffer; they shudder not, when danger threatens; they are not frightened when death summons them. Should I in aught incline myself to live for sin, remind me, I beseech thee, of the sorrows which my sins occasioned thee, and these shall instigate me to flee from iniquity. Should I ever murmur to accept the

little share of troubles which thou apportionest to me, O! do thou then represent in vivid traits to my heart, those torments, that self-denial, that cross, that death to which thou didst submit in my behalf. May thy love replenish my whole mind, rule my whole life, and be at length my comfort in death!

For what death could indeed be more blessed, than that I should die to thee? In thy fellowship, and in thy love I feel an inexpressible consolation, which infinitely exceeds all the bitterness of vital extinction. Now then be it my everlasting resolution to remain thine even in the time of the separation of the flesh and spirit. I will tear myself loose from the vanities that might by any means fetter my imagination; I will banish all love of the terrestrial, and thou alone, crucified Jesus, shall be the object of my vows and the delight of my heart. Then also, when my thoughts are vanishing, like a light to which nourishment is wanting, they shall be employed upon thee. And if I go out of this world with the trust that my departure is in thee, so shall I be able to enter into yon other world, with the blessed hope that in thy company I shall live for ever. O! what a contemplation is this—to live eternally for thee. Here, O Lord, I cannot fully conceive it; but above, I shall comprehend and experience, in all its extent, how happy the soul is that lives for thee.

FEBRUARY 17.

The Immensity of Jesus' Love to Man.

Regard, O my soul, with attentiveness and with astonishment, the love of thy Redeemer—waft thyself to Bethlehem! Behold him, the resplendence of the glory of God, in lowly guise, in misery, and want. Accompany him through the course of his amiable life—observe the beneficent love with which he healed the sick, comforted the wretched, and pardoned the sinful? See him, while testifying the strongest evidences of charity towards man, by men themselves persecuted, reviled, affronted, and, in despite of the unsullied inno-

cence of his heart, infamously treated and tormented! View the conflict which in Gethsemane he so heroically supported; mark the tears which he shed; count the groans which he uttered; hear that humble prayer which he rendered up to his Father; and admire the obedience with which he yielded himself to his fate, and to the will of his heavenly Parent!

Mount up to Golgotha with the holy sufferer—the scene where Omnipotence displayed its utmost greatness, and Divine Love its most wondrous power. Look upon that Jesus, the image of the Father; see how he was hung stripped on the tree, consorted with two murderous malefactors, pierced through with nails, and encompassed with executioners! But contemplate him as under so many agonies he kept himself firm through love; while the same love which prompted him to submit to these pains, also strengthened him to endure them with patience! Gaze upon him, arrived at the highest step of mortal sufferings, and listen to his noble-minded affectionate supplication for those who with obdurate hearts scoffed at his sorrows!

At such a spectacle, surely, my soul cannot remain unmoved. In recompense for such love, resolution to love Jesus in return cannot be hard. This is all, O my soul, that thy injured Benefactor requires from thee. And what love can be sufficiently strong, sufficiently ardent to repay, even in a small degree, that which he has done for thee? Yet he seeks from thee only a sincere affection, even though it should be weak. And wouldst thou not sacrifice to him all thy hopes, all thy inclinations, and all thy wishes? To love him more perfectly, to trust in him more confidently, to be devoted to him more earnestly, be this the most eager desire which thou daily endeavourest to accomplish. Make manifest even to-day the effects which thy love towards Jesus produces in thee. Reflect upon that love with which Jesus loved thee. Ask thyself, if the particular line of conduct which thou shalt at any time pursue—if the sin which thou shalt at any time commit, be consistent with the love which thou owest to Jesus. Never forget, that all the blessings which thou shalt this day receive, are the consequences of that day on which Jesus fulfilled his offering for thee.—Then wilt thou cease not, in obedience and piety, to thank him for his love throughout all eternity.

FEBRUARY 18.

Gethsemane.

Oh! eternal Son of God, how terrible was the night which thou in sleeplessness wast constrained to pass at Gethsemane! How unspeakable were thy sufferings, when thou wast compelled to bear the entire load of the sins of the human race, and feel that anguish which the sinner experiences as he stands before the tribunal of the Most High!—That night imparted blessings to all my nights and days. Whilst I recollect the repose which was granted to me during the past hours of darkness, I call at the same time to my remembrance, that disquietude, that anxiety, and that struggle through which thy last night in this world was rendered so blessed and memorable. Wretch that I am, what would be my fate, if thou hadst not endured to the end under these so inexpressible sufferings? What would my condition be, if I were compelled to taste that cup which thou wast forced to drink? If that displeasure of the eternal God which thou hast felt, should so press on me; if I were called to surmount that contest with hell and death which thou so gloriously sustainedst? Ah! I shudder at the thought, and confess the high value of thy love towards me that prompted thee for my salvation to become subject to such direful miseries.

Loving Redeemer! I worship thee in deep humility, and though I am little able to express or worthily magnify thy love, yet am I ready, according to my power, to do thee homage, with sacred reverence. Never will I contemplate these frightful agonies, without abhorring sin, which brought upon thee all this anguish. It is I, whom that anger which oppressed thee to the ground should strike! It is I who ought thus to shake and tremble! I ought to feel, in all its poignancy, that grief which, even to thyself, was hardly sufferable! My sins, my sins have lain on thee! It is my pride that thy prostration at thy Father's feet has atoned! It is my restless quaking conscience that thou hast allayed through thy expiring pangs! My life's last extremity hast thou, through the experience of this deadly tribulation, sweetened!

O ! that I might often—that I might always think of this : how much trouble it has cost thee to set me free from that wretchedness, into which, through iniquity, I had fallen ! Jesus, do thou thyself imprint deeply on my mind what great things thou hast achieved for me. Picture thyself to me under that appearance in which on the Mount of Olives, thou trembledst and wast dismayed, so often as my heart, with reckless joy, would triumph in its crimes. Let thy anguish affright me, whenever I proceed unmoved in the paths of transgression, and my conscience cradles me asleep in perilous security. Let me be struck with horror to the soul, at the scourges which thou hast borne, whenever I promise myself rest and happiness in my misdeeds. Then will the remembrance of thy ransoming woes indeed fortify me. In thy anguish shall I find my ease; in thy chastisement, my absolution; in thy prayer, my acceptable hearing; and in thy death-struggle my liberation. Even in that inevitable hour when I too, like thee, must fight with sin and sin's tyrannic offspring—there shall I through the battle be powerfully upheld, and through thy victory beyond measure reinforced.

FEBRUARY 19

Jesus praying for his Enemies ought to inspire us with mutual Kindness and Forgiveness.

How can I, with so sublime an example of the most noble-minded philanthropy and charity, be implacable and void of affection?—Jesus prayed for his foes, he prayed for them while they were studying how to torment him in the most sensible manner. There, where they poured out every curse upon him, he blessed them; there, where vengeance inspired their whole heart, his soul became susceptible of the utmost compassion; there, where they were busied with devilish zeal to make him miserable, he hastened to implore for them the greatest happiness ! I acknowledge the vastness of this magnanimity, I perceive the high stamp of this pitying love. But it is not enough that I behold it, and wonder. No ! I

will strive to render myself, even in this respect, like to my Jesus.

How easy ought this duty to become to me, when I compare the Infinite Majesty of Christ with my own vileness. He was the only-begotten Son of God, the perfectly guiltless, the most holy one of all; the wrongs which were heaped upon him were the sharpest and most dreadful with which any man was ever afflicted; yet his enemies were blessed by him, and by him redeemed! And how willingly did he also forgive these workers of iniquity their injustice! But I, on the contrary, would search for a pretext to excuse my harshness? I, who am of dust and ashes, I would do this! I, for the grievances that are put upon me, would meditate revenge! How dissimilar must I then be to thee, O Jesus, who in thy forbearance towards thy enemies hast exhibited the most amiable pattern of gentleness!

Let now then thy example, thou Son of God, make an impression on my soul never to be obliterated. Let the first thought that arises within me at the view of the unfriendly, the ungrateful, the faithless, be, that thou, O Saviour, interceding for thy murderers, didst exclaim: "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" Let thy wonderful, thy indescribable sympathy endow my mind with that mild impulse which shall excite me to the heroic love of them who hate me, and to the supplication of blessings upon them that curse me. Triumph, triumph over my heart through the efficacy of thy love, and vanquish those uncharitable, revengeful emotions, which so often spring up in my bosom. Without thy support all my intentions will be powerless, and the first approach of my adversary will destroy them. But if thou shouldst impart to me that strength which through thy mediation thou hast obtained for me, I shall be able to exercise this duty, though it oft appears so hard and impracticable to my corrupted heart.

Now am I going into the society of my fellow-creatures. These sentiments shall everywhere accompany me, and on all occasions will I think as nobly, and with as Christian a temper as I have here done in privacy. But may thy love bear likewise with me, and thy atonement blot out my transgressions. O! how needful for me is thy intercession! Pray for me, even though I should be so unfortunate as to let my

eyes lose sight of thee. Pray for me, my Redeemer, and let me find pardon for those errors which I shall this day commit. Pray for me in thy mercy, that I fall not into perdition, but be rescued and beatified for ever.

FEBRUARY 20.

Christ's Sufferings.

How graciously, O Jesus, hast thou in thy sufferings provided for my necessities! How fully hast thou supplied my insufficiency, healed my transgressions, ransomed my sins, and annulled my curse!

Manifold as were thy sufferings, are the blessings resulting from them. Every circumstance of the last events of thy life is for me rich with instruction and full of comfort. May then my soul be quickened by the contemplation of thy woes, and thence extract that consolation which even in them thou hast prepared for me! I see thee hang panting on the cross, deprived of all support: thou thirstest, and that refreshment which might invigorate thee, under the pressure of thy agonies, is denied to thee! Sad as this spectacle appears to me, yet I discover in it an equal source of self-congratulation. Thy desire for bodily sustainment is a type of that affectionate longing of thy soul to gain peace and salvation for mankind, which rendered thee so prompt to offer up thy life for sinners! Here I behold a fountain which invites me to draw eternal health and tranquillity. And why should I be slow to avail myself of this good fortune? No, my Jesus, I hasten to meet thy wishes. Truly I thirst not after thee so fondly as thou longest after me; but still, so certainly as thou art indeed my Saviour, would I be thy redeemed, thy worshipper, thy child.

Thou didst endure hell in thy heart, and feel the terror of the sentence which condemned me to the most horrid misery. Ah! how little cause have I to fear hell, since through thee I have the hope of heaven! Who shall condemn me, since I am acquitted by thee? What can cast dread upon me, since thou hast appointed peace for me? How can I doubt

the grace of God, since thou wast left abandoned of all help, to obtain for me thy Father's love? And how can I be afraid of death, since in thy death I find the bond of my blessed immortality?

Make these holy thoughts evermore lively in my soul, and vouchsafe, O Christ, that through the same, I may be ever gratefully and undeviatingly devoted to thy service. As thou thirstest to procure salvation for me and for the world, so let me bend my desires to the welfare of my brother mortals; let thy sufferings and thy submission restrain me from striving after earthly and perishable possessions. Give me also a mind noble enough and willing to sacrifice myself to the good of my fellow-Christians, and in all respects to keep their real advantage in view. Further, grant me, through thy Spirit, to understand how culpable and how scandalous a thing it is to transgress thy law. Let this heart, now so tranquil and so insensible in its sins, be wrung to the innermost core; let it be shaken with dismay at the contemplation of that anguish, which on my account thou hast experienced. And should it then be wounded by sincere remorse or by godly affliction, heal it again through the promises of thy Scriptures. Send me faith in thy word and maintain me in the same, that, being dead to sin, I may live for thee, and serve thee through all eternity.

FEBRUARY 21.

The Obligation laid upon us, by the Death of the Saviour, to forsake Sin.

Must I not be the most ungrateful of all men, were I to enter anew into the service of sin, seeing that for sin Jesus died? Should I thus scorn the grace of my God, deny the Lord, dishonour my Saviour, I should heap upon myself a fresh and heavy load of the Almighty's vengeance. Far, for ever, far be from me such unthankfulness, such hideous enormity of vice. I will not harden my heart against the tender invitation of my Jesus. I will open my soul to the

sweet emotions of gratitude and mutual love. I will work out for myself, through constant exercise and pious meditation, that faith which rendered my Redeemer so comforted and so steadfast even to the end, and strive, through the tenor of my life, to follow that example which he has left to me. How greatly should I dishonour my Saviour, and how largely should I rob myself of the sacred fruits of his sorrows, were I not to endeavour to become like to him! He has bequeathed to me, in his last sufferings, the grandest example of all the virtues; and to frame myself according to it is as much my duty as it is my comfort and my joy that, through these pangs he has accomplished my atonement.

From this imitation of the example of my Saviour, will I allow myself to be withheld by no ingratitude of the world, by no contempt, and by no scorn. Like him, I will oppose to the persecutor mildness, to the scoffer silence, to the unjust patience, to the slanderer innocence; and cry out in prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what th y do!" Like him, I will yield with still resignation to all the decrees of my celestial parent, and strive to render myself edifying to my brethren. As he did, so will I, for the sake of the common weal, voluntarily undergo hardship and calamity, and consecrate my repose, my health, my happiness, my life itself, as a help-offering to my fellow-creatures, provided I can thus rescue their souls, ward off their perdition, effect their salvation. And should the Divine Author of my existence deem painful trials necessary to my preparation for eternal life, then will I deny myself, take up my cross, and follow my Redeemer as well as I shall be able. Should I, like him, be placed in circumstances where I must pour forth prayers and supplications with tears, so also like him will I hold God in reverence, and confidently trust that he will hear me, and by his aid bring me out of my difficulties to his own kingdom. Should I, notwithstanding my best efforts, and most upright intentions, experience the calumny and the rancour of enemies, I will not let myself be thereby hindered from doing good. Should my dearest friends abandon me in the time of need, I will regard their perfidy with composure, and so much the more embolden myself through trust in the living God. Should my soul even be

distracted by doubt and despondency, and no ray of joy of comfort beam upon me, then will I, in this my utmost despair, think of that exclamation of my propitiator, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Nor will I cast from me the conviction that the Lord will in due season have compassion upon me, and strongly uphold me with his love, that I may not ultimately fail under my trials. And when at length the hour of my decease shall arrive, I will deliver my spirit, ransomed by himself, into his keeping, and through faith in him, vanquish the latest enemy. Well will it be for me, if the redemption of my Saviour thus redound to my consolation in those grievous moments! Then, in all the changes and chances of my life, will I nourish a soothing hope within my breast, and in death itself find life and encouragement. Jesus, thou who diedst for me, graciously bestow upon me this fruit of thy sufferings. Make me ever more and more like to thee, and let me be as willing to follow thee in the thorny way, as when thou leadest me through pleasant paths. Conducted by thee, I shall walk securely, and no deceitful road will allure me astray from my salvation. Guide me, my Saviour, according to thy counsel, and finally accept of me with honour.

FEBRUARY 22.

Man bound in Duty, through the Demeanor of Christ, to the Exercise of Brotherly Affection.

Most incumbent upon me, as one of the redeemed, as a follower and as a disciple of Jesus, is the active exercise of sincere fraternal affection towards my brethren. How nobly, how profusely has the Lord spread his pity over me! Shall not I then have compassion for my fellow-servants? For me he gave his body, for me he lavished his blood! How may I repay to thee, O Christ, thy faithfulness, which thou hast manifested towards me? Repay thee! Alas, poor dependant that I am on thy bounty, this I cannot do. But if, out of love to thee, I feed thy hungry brethren, give drink to the thirsty, raiment to the naked, and aid to the oppressed,

thou wilt so consider these things as though they had happened to thyself. And this proof of my gratitude will I with a ready heart accord to thee.

Thou hast achieved the atonement of my sins; not, however, of mine only, but of those of all men. Must not then all be as dearly and as highly esteemed in thy sight as I am? And can I hate or despise any of those whom thou holdest in such regard, whom thou so dearly valuest, whom thou hast purchased at such a price? Shall I be ashamed to salute those as brethren to whom thou vouchsafest that name? Far be this wickedness from any of thy worshippers! How could I belong to Christ if I wanted the tokens by which his disciples are distinguished, if I kept not thy pattern, O Jesus, continually before my eyes? Yes, I too will be minded even as thou wast. I will endeavour that thy love may be so powerful within me, that, if God's pleasure should exact from me such a sacrifice, I also would immediately resign my life for my fellow-creatures.

But I entreat thee, O God of everlasting love! that thou thyself wouldst establish this lofty strain of sentiment in my mind. Without thy grace I shall always remain as void of charity, as thankless, as fickle as I have hitherto been. But, if thy influence take possession of my heart, and thy Spirit rule me, I shall be always, benignant Saviour, as thou wast, full of charity and kindness, and to-day, and at all times, do honour to thee and to the knowledge of thy name. Mould me into so beneficent a philanthropist, that I, like thee, may set right those that are gone astray, raise up the fallen, console the wretched, and bring the sinner into thy fellowship. O, how many opportunites will this day afford me of showing myself to be really that which I profess to be, *a Christian!* Many that are weak, it will be in my power to sustain; to many that are in error, I shall be able to point out the true way; many that are tottering, I shall possess the means to encourage; and many that are in trouble, it will be within my ability to comfort and gladden. Many I shall be able, if I cannot otherwise assist them, to serve by my prayers. O! make this duty the grand business of my life. Let me this day often stretch forth my hands to thee, and earnestly charge thee with the concerns of thy redeemed. Then, O Jesus! if I walk thus uprightly before thee, look

down upon me with favour, and let me become worthy of that bliss, which thou hast procured for me, and in which thou hast promised that I shall participate. And then, also, if I commend to thee my own condition, do thou hear me from thy heaven, and vouchsafe to me that salvation after which my soul panteth. To thy glorious name be honour and adoration ascribed now and for ever.

FEBRUARY 23

The Sinner seeking Refuge in the Sanctuary of the Cross.

WHERE should I find rest and consolation under the conviction of my sinfulness, and the accusations of my conscience, were it not with thee, thou Saviour of sinners? However sincere and ardent my repentance may be, it cannot undo the evil which I have done, restore to me the time that I have consumed in vicious pursuits, or render back to me that inward testimony of innocence, and purity of heart, which I have lost. Against thee, O God, have I offended, and of thy benignity have I shown myself unworthy; and thy chastisements, thou Sanctifier and Judge, have I merited! With what then shall I comfort myself? Only with thy expiation, my Intercessor and my Saviour; only with thy death, thou crucified Jesus, who for me hast struggled and expired. I call to mind thy assurance, that thou wast sent to make sinners blessed, and I feel composed. O! what is all the comfort and all the hope that the world can give me, in comparison with the comfort of thy grace, and the soothing expectation of finding favour with God? Yes, the cross of the Reconciler is the foundation of all my happiness, the basis of my anticipations of glory, the guarantee of my everlasting exaltation. How is it possible that to me this cross should be as a stumblingblock and foolishness; how could I unite in the judgment and the scoffs of those light-minded impious men who debase him that was crucified, and, in the blindness of their heart, fancy that they need no Redeemer? No, to me the cross shall ever be an emblem of divine knowledge, because it presents to my eyes God's wise counsel for the

redemption of a fallen race; because it excites me to fight boldly and cheerfully against sin and wickedness, in the same manner as my Jesus himself fought; because it reminds me how dearly I was purchased; because it impels me to praise God in holiness and submission, to love God as he has loved me, and to reverence him in spirit and in truth; because it elevates me to the rapturous hope, that I shall one day be there, where my Saviour now is,—he who sitteth at the right hand of the Almighty, his heavenly Father!

FEBRUARY 24.

The Christian reflects that for him the Saviour died.

Whilst my soul maturely contemplates what Jesus has done and suffered for the human race, and even for me, I feel myself penetrated with the most heartfelt thankfulness. What should I indeed be, if Christ had not died for me? I should, it is true, be a conspicuous creature of God's creation; yet with all my superiority, I should still be extremely wretched and unfortunate, and destitute of every consolatory hope. What would a life avail me, which, after a few days, should finish in this world, and immerse me, in another, in endless misery! What would happiness on this side of the tomb profit me, if beyond the grave I beheld in perspective the most terrible calamities awaiting me?—And what at last would become of me in death, were I compelled to sink into the arms of the destroyer, and yet possess not the assurance that he would bear me to a second and a better existence?

O God! I cannot reflect on these things without magnifying thy goodness, through which I have received privileges the most eminent, and expectations the most glorious! I can awake no single morning, without remembering, with the tenderest emotion, the atonement of thy Son, Jesus Christ, through whom all the hours of my life have been thus blessed. Now, every revolving day brings me nearer to the joys of eternity. Now may I each morning reassure myself of the grace of God. Now I dare to put away the

fear, that the Lord will utterly deliver me over to the vengeance of his justice for the sins which I shall this day commit. The blood that has flown for me will turn aside the righteous chastisements of my insulted Maker: it will cleanse my iniquities, and diffuse the choicest blessings through my earthly course. I shall be able to feel consoled and calm amid all the adversities and trials of this mortal state, and hold myself secure of God's forbearing patience. For who shall condemn me? IT IS CHRIST WHO HATH DIED FOR ME!

O heart-cheering sound! For me, even for me did he die! I also have a portion in all the blessedness which, through his expiation, he has obtained for the world. For me did he bear that immeasurable burden of woes, that curse, that judgment of his Father! Soul, renew thou often this sublime, this all-consoling idea:—for thee also has Jesus died! Recall it, if at any time thou be ready to abandon thyself to evil. What! wilt thou again stain thyself with vice, when the blood of Jesus has already washed away thy impurities? Recall it, when the world shall be nigh at any time to seduce thee. What! wilt thou relinquish thyself to voluptuous gratifications, when Jesus for thy sake deprived himself of every pleasure? Comfort thyself with this idea, when thou shalt be cast down on the appearance of tribulation. How! wilt thou despond under such light troubles, when thy Jesus has endured so incalculably much for thee? Think, when death affrights thee, that Christ died for thee. How! wouldst thou be afraid of death, when thy Saviour has vanquished death? Think of this great truth, if thou shalt ever become cold and insensible towards God.—Thus, O soul, mayest thou be wholly transported by the contemplation of the suffering Jesus into the most grateful and rapturous feelings. Thus may thy darling thought, thy desire, and the object of thy love be Jesus, the Crucified.

FEBRUARY 25.

The Cross the Teacher of the Soul.

To refer in everything thy feelings and thy sentiments to the cross of Jesus, is that habit of thought, which thou must

assume, O my soul, if thou wouldst receive a portion in the blessings of the crucifixion of thy Mediator. By this principle must thou be influenced, if thou wouldst seek to please the Lord that has ransomed thee. Love towards him must entirely engross thee, it must enrapture thee, it must bear thee away in its impetuosity, and preponderate over all that thou esteemest most precious.

Thou owest affection to thy friends: but where is there a friend who has loved thee more than Jesus? No one has greater love than this, that he lose his life for his brethren; and Christ has died for thee. Then does he deserve that thou shouldst proffer to him thy whole love, and sacrifice to him even the love of thy best friends. Thou lovest dignity and honour: come to the cross of Jesus, here are the means of securing immortality, and of being exalted to imperishable glory. Thou lovest riches: but where are they in greater abundance than there, where Jesus invites us to all the treasures of the blessings of heaven? Thou lovest pleasures: but what are all other pleasures to the joy which the grace of a reconciled God bestows upon us? Thou lovest wisdom: behold, here at the cross of Jesus is the most profound and celestial knowledge! Here learnest thou that art in which the wisest of men are deficient—the art of subduing thyself, the world, death, and hell. Thou lovest a long, contented, and tranquil life: see, the Prince of Life, who was crucified for thee, fulfils thy wishes, and satisfies thy hope.

Be it then my unalterable resolution to love from my heart the Lord crucified! And how happy shall I be, if the love of Him who was crucified fill my whole soul! I long, O Jesus, after this happiness, and desire nothing so much as that this love may replenish and govern my heart. Therefore will I often and seriously reflect how imperative a duty is the love of thee. No circumstances shall have such power over my heart, as to draw me away from that devotion which I owe to thee. Yet how many things will this day allure me! But I have formed the steadfast purpose, that nothing shall so much charm me as thy cross and thy redemption, thou love-abounding Jesus! Friends, I will love you; but require not that I should forget that Friend who loved me unto death. Wisdom, I will love thee; but far more will

I love Him, who has instructed me from the tree of Calvary. Joys of Creation, I will love you; but more dearly will I love Him who has provided for me better and more lasting delights, than nature in all her wide circle of productive diversity can furnish. I will not be indifferent to all worldly renown; but the honour to be styled *His* follower and *His* child, shall be with me a point of infinitely higher ambition. Life, I will love thee; but yet more will I love Him who gave his own life away for me; and to Him will I sacrifice thee, should he claim thee from me as an offering! I feel indeed how much this effort would cost my heart. But, if I be supported by thee, O Lord, my Saviour; if thou thyself fillest my bosom with love towards thee: then with a voluntary and joyful mind shall I be able to resign all things to thee, even those that are most cherished by me, and moreover to extol thee through my death.

FEBRUARY 26.

The Constant Remembrance of Christ.

Who ought not to be mindful of thee, O Jesus, who art so boundless in love; who, out of affection for us, hast suffered and striven so much; who, amid the sharpest pangs of thy afflictions, yes, even under the agonies of thy most rigorous death, didst think of us and pray for us? And yet, O self-devoted Saviour, the world forgets what great thanks, and how much love it owes thee! Yet is it, notwithstanding these affecting memorials of thy friendship, insensible towards thee, and void of love! But, though it may be that many slight thee and are careless about thee, I will remember thee, I will keep thy griefs in memory; and on every recollection of thy name, thank thee, that, through thy redemption, thou hast erected so glorious a monument of thy benevolence and thy truth.

Now will I banish out of my imagination all else that rejoices and touches my heart, and solely abandon myself to the contemplation of thy kindness; for what could awake in my breast a stronger, a more generous sympathy towards my

fellow-mortals, than the consideration of thy free-will offering, and of the cheerfulness with which thou drankest the cup presented to thee by thy Father, that thou mightest complete the vast work of atonement. Thou hast endured so much, and so gladly—and yet I would hesitate or shrink back, when, out of love, I ought to sacrifice my own gratifications to the weal of my brethren, and submit to troubles for their sake? Shall I linger, when charity calls me to works of compassion? No; I will love my brethren as thou lovedst them; I will give up my life as thou gavest up thine to liberate them.

At present I ponder with much earnestness on this unlimited love; but, alas! I fear that these sentiments may be borne down by the distractions in which this day will involve me. O, rule my heart, therefore, that I may be constantly mindful of thee and true to thee, my Jesus; and like unto thee—the very semblance! If I receive from thee new blessings, let me reflect how hard has been thy task to obtain them for me. If my perverted heart incline to follow sin, remind me of thy distress on the Olive Mount, of thy death on the cross, through which thou hast done penance for my transgressions. If the love which glows in my bosom towards thee grow cold, let the retrospection of thy torments enliven my torpid spirit. If my conscience struggle with melancholy and terror, let me think of thy anguish, which has procured quiet for my perturbed soul. If, through my trials, I should become weak and downcast, let me remember that steadfastness with which thou didst surmount all trials, and turn my thoughts to that strengthening aid which thou, through thy dying agonies, hast prepared for me. Thus will the sweet recollection of thee, my Saviour, prove to me a safeguard against sin, and a consolation under all the trials of this life; and thus will it ultimately in my last hour serve as an antidote to me against the venom of death.

FEBRUARY 27.

Man rendered unworthy of the precious Blood of the Redeemer, through the unchristian Feelings of Anger and Revenge.

Out of love for mankind my Saviour suffered the death of sinners. The misery of his brethren afflicted him, and he generously took their debt upon himself: that they might have peace, he was stricken; and this highest proof of his affection, he gave to the unthankful, to the unfeeling, and to the merciless, to them that mocked at him, and defamed him; —he died amid the insults of irreconcilable foes. Thus perfectly did he fulfil his own glorious doctrine: *Pray for them that persecute and revile thee!* And I who count myself in the number of those who profess his name, and boast myself one of his redeemed, I would recompense evil with evil! I would nourish rancour and enmity in my heart, and yield to the folly of imagining that revenge is sweet! Oh! far be from me such unchristian sentiments; they would destroy the quiet of my conscience, and deprive me of the grace of God, debase me, and render me unworthy of the salvation of Jesus. Henceforward, from this day will I labour to adopt his example, and to be placable, gentle, and noble-minded.— Herein confirm me, O my God: and let the image of my Saviour, so redundant in meekness, rise before my eyes, as often as I shall be tempted to anger or vengeance. Steadfast and unmoved, I vow to thee, thou searcher of hearts, will I endure the unprovoked affronts of wicked men; every thing through which I may be offended will I refer in secret to thee, all-righteous arbiter, who rewardest each of us according to his works. Like my Jesus will I bless them that curse me; and do good to them that detest and injure me. For thus I shall possess the consolatory consciousness that thou art gracious to me, that I belong to thy household, and am under thy blessing.

How little should I deserve, if I entertained hateful and revengeful passions, to be ransomed by that precious blood which thou, O Saviour, hast shed for me! How would the angels regard me with horror, they who make thy pro-

pitiation the constant theme of their hymns of praise! How little should I be in unison with the assembly of the blessed, who perpetually occupy themselves with the contemplation and glorification of thy redeeming death!—And how wouldst thou look upon me—me whom thou hast so inexpressibly loved? Never, never let me wrong thee by such ingratitude. The less I am in a condition worthily to magnify thee even by the most ardent thankfulness, the more will I strive to honour thee through a zealous and faithful imitation; the more ready shall my soul be to execute thy chief commandment, the commandment of love: the more earnestly shall my heart acknowledge thy goodness, by copying thy mercy —and this will I do in order that thou mayst hereafter on the great day of judgment account me among thy faithful, and deem me deserving of thy fellowship.

FEBRUARY 28.

The Horror of that Self-reproach which tells the Sinner, that for him the Death of the Redeemer has been in vain.

How agonizing would the reproaches be, which I should have to make to myself, if with such plentiful aids towards becoming blessed, I should go down to perdition! God has done everything for me, and I would not let myself be saved. All the endeavours of the Lord had my happiness for their aim; and I employed myself in heaping up my own condemnation. All that Jesus suffered tended to this purpose, to free me from the curse; but I, I voluntarily chose it, and cast away his blessings. God works my regeneration, I, my own obduracy; he, my liberation, I, my own slavery; he, my felicity, I, my own downfall. He wished to give me heaven, and I, idiot that I was, and blind, selected to my misery, hell.—And such are the upbraidings by which the damned will hereafter be tortured, and which will augment their anguish beyond measure. Through these accusations will they themselves convict their own conscience, and the expressions of their own lips will justify God's judgment. The spilt blood of Jesus will cry out for wrath against them;

the consoling thought that they were once ransomed will be to them a fresh cause of grief; and everlasting though fruitless remorse will devour them.

But for me, I still live; and my repentance and penitence may still be profitable to me. Did it now please thee, O Lord, to take me from this world, full of reverence should I be constrained to acknowledge, that thou hast left nothing undone to render me blessed; but at the same time, with shame and contrition, must I confess my own ingratitude and contempt of thy favour. I should be forced to approve the sentence which thou wouldst pronounce upon me. But, O long-suffering and merciful God, yet spare me, and grant me space to repent of my unthankfulness and my obstinacy. My sins, through which I have dishonoured the merits of my Saviour, are to me grievous in remembrance, and full of vexation. Ah! let me be restored to peace through the torments which, for me, my Redeemer has undergone? let me not despond under the wailings of my conscience, but let me find rest in the belief that my Saviour has endured for me!— And if hitherto his Spirit has not moved me, if his word has not influenced me, if his admonition has not brought me to repentance, henceforth must every succeeding day testify for me, that I work out my salvation with fear and trembling; that I wisely spend the period of probation which, through God's grace, remains to me; that I seriously and earnestly strive to become worthy of the redemption of Christ, and of that supreme blessing which I daily supplicate from thee, O my Father! Especially in that decisive moment, when my sins shall torment me, and awakenedconscience affright me, and the expectation of the grave and judgment oppress me with sadness, be merciful to me, O Jesus, and let me, through the potency of thy expiring pangs, vanquish all tribulation, all anxiety, all doubt, all terror!

FEBRUARY 29.

Misspent Time.

They are fled for ever—the days which composed the month are this day terminated. Nothing of them, except

the remembrance, remains to me, and even this perhaps will vanish with the present morning! Yet it shall not be so—I will strive to fix the recollection of them deeply in my soul, and carefully to reckon the hours which I have left behind me. But, alas! how many squandered days do I with shame and sorrow encounter among them! How many that I have sacrificed to the indulgence of my pleasures; how many which I have employed on things which are indeed permitted, but which I have thus employed with a far different view from that of serving God; how many which I have consumed in frivolous amusements, in superfluous attention to my body, and in idleness! All this is time lost.—And how few have been the minutes during the same period which I have devoted to the concerns of my salvation, and to prepare myself for heaven!

Yet, among all these misspent days, each was distinguished by God's beneficent love. I could not have existed so many moments as I have lived weeks, had not God's mercy borne with me, and his patience spared me. O! how lowly must I therefore humble myself before thee, most gracious Lord, and how highly magnify thy goodness, which is the sole comfort of my life! But shall I still longer dream away my existence, and still further abuse thy patience? No, I will strain, with redoubled industry, every nerve to attain the object for which my life was bestowed upon me. The less active I have hitherto been in providing for my salvation, the more strenuous will I be for the future, in fitting myself for eternity. This shall be the primary scope of all my thoughts, efforts, cares, and undertakings. This very day will I make the commencement of my purposed sacred occupation. For how uncertain is the duration of my vital career? What answer is there to the question, How many days shall I still live? O Lord, I know not the hour which shall gather me to the multitude of thy departed. The night of death may even now perhaps be gathering round me, ere I have completed this supplication, or stammered out to thee my praise. And what would become of me should this *perhaps* be realized?

What would I, at the last day of my life, desire in regard to the days that preceded it? Doubtless this, that they had not been lost. Grant me then, O God, the prudence to lay

out my days to advantage, and to consider their real utility and purpose. I must work while it is yet light; the time cometh, when no man can work. Eternity approaches, when there will be no time for repentance, no time for return, no time for indulgence, no time for trial.—And if eternity were now to seize me!—Ah! eternal God, cut me not off in thy anger; but be propitious to me, and endure me with forbearance, that I may reach the goal of my faith and my hope—my soul's salvation.

MARCH 1.

The Blessedness of Heaven.

In how lively a manner does each time that I awake from my sleep remind me of my appointed awakening from the torpor of the grave—of my eternal and most high destiny; how much then, also, do I rejoice that Christ has taken away the dominion of death, and through his gospel brought life and imperishable existence even for me into light! As often as my heart bears witness to me, that I have walked before God, and been deserving of his approbation, I feel a conscious foretaste of that felicity which shall hereafter in heaven be the reward of piety and faithfulness. But if the delight which fills the souls of the holy already on earth be so exquisite, how indescribably rapturous must be the bliss of the saints made perfect above! Does the heart even in this world, feel itself so contented in the love and the expectation of God; how happy will it be when it is freed, both from the weakness which here still oppresses it, and from the pains of the frail body; and when it is able to exalt itself with purest adoration and reverence to its Creator! Does the Lord grant to me already here so many gratifications in the mutual interchanges of friendship; how will it be in heaven, when I become a co-mate of the angels, and a companion of the glorified! Am I already here so rich, so full of joy, so fortunate; how rich, how transported, how gifted with good things shall I be in heaven!

Soar then aloft O my soul, to that place of completed

felicity. Rejoice in thy celestial vocation, comfort thyself with thy eternal inheritance, when the earth burdens and afflicts thee with its cares, and when thy temporal futurity appears dark and dubious. Cheer thyself under every separation that occasions thee sorrow and dejection with the thought that thou wilt one day find again in heaven all those of whom death hath deprived thee here; and wilt there enter into the most intimate connexion with Christ himself. Accustom thyself to keep the blessedness of heaven constantly in view, so will the world vanish from thy sight, and nothing will then seem so desirable or important to thee as those better regions to which thou art destined. Frequently compare the present short and wearisome state with that pleasing and everlasting condition in heaven, so wilt thou never fail in comfort, in hope, and in joy. In hope thou wilt be blessed.

MARCH 2.

Jesus the only Comfort under Sin in the Hour of Death.

Unsolicitous about my sins, and unmoved by the punishment which awaits them, already thus far have I proceeded carelessly along the path of life, and only a fleeting fruitless thought has now and then risen in my soul to remind me of my committed errors. But I endeavour, or rather I wish, much more hope, that I shall not now continue in this culpable negligence. A time indeed must come when the entire magnitude of my sins will present itself before me; when my slumbering conscience will awake; when my insensible heart will learn its wretchedness, and the feeling of my unworthiness will lie upon me like a heavy load. Unconcerned as I now am, I shall not at least be so on the approach of death. Ah! then, then will all that is frightful come together, and the burden which has hitherto been so strange to me, will press upon me with a double weight. And when thus self-accused and self-condemned, and on the brink of the grave, I perceive and confess the enormity of my guilt; when hastening dissolution and impending judgment strike

me with affright; when there is no ease in my bones, and no comfort in my breast; what refuge will then be held out to me if it is not thy cross, O Jesus, on which thou hast atoned for my transgressions? How inadequate will then all the means of consolation appear to me, by which I have hitherto lulled asleep my remorse! How little soothing will be those grounds of tranquillity by which I now strive to uphold myself! Nothing, nothing will remain to me for my encouragement, except faith in thee, who camest to make sinners blessed,—in my Redeemer and my Saviour.

But if this is the best trust of my heart, wherefore do I not even now have recourse to this comfort? Wherefore do I not immediately provide for myself healing against the hour of agony? Ah! my God, I shall always proceed headlong in security and in indifference, if thou thyself govern not my steps. It is, however, my reliance and my joy, that thou art powerful in thy weakness, that love to thee arms my heart with strength and courage, and that I am able to effect all things through him that makes me of great might—even Christ.

MARCH 3.

Lessons of High Import drawn from the awful Passion of the Holy Saviour.

With all the horrors, which the sufferings of Jesus on the Mount of Olives involves, still is his struggle for me a most instructive lesson. For this reason will I contemplate my sorrowing Saviour, and from his conduct under these sore pangs learn the virtues in which I ought to be like to him.

Behold, Jesus worships alone; he instantly withdraws himself from the society of his dearest friends, as soon as he purposes to converse in prayer with his Father. How full of counsel is this example! Occasions may occur in my own life, when the sympathy of my truest well-wishers can afford me no relief, and when private discourse with my God will remain my only consolation. Then, after the manner of Christ, will I bear myself away from every object that may divert my thoughts, and in lonely stillness pour out my soul

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before God, and commend to him all those circumstances, in which I can expect no help even from the most faithful participators in my interests. And with what humility does my Redeemer offer up his supplications! he sinks down upon his knees, he lies with his face towards the earth. And who was this lowly petitioner? He, to whom all knees bow; he, to whom in token of adoration all creatures prostrate themselves in the dust, and before whose resplendent gaze the very angels are obliged to veil their countenances! Who am I, that I am ashamed to cast myself in the dust before God? I am nothing but mere dust itself and ashes; yet would I not bend beneath the powerful hand of the Omnipotent!

Jesus prays repeatedly: again and again he falls on the ground before God, nor ceases till the Deity listens to his entreaty. So persevering, so ardent, so confiding must my prayers also be: at length I too shall be heard as my Jesus was. How affecting is his submission to the will of his Father! The distress which he then felt was the most severe, yet is he ready to drink the bitter cup, yet he resigns himself to God's pleasure, and cries out, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." How insignificant are all my troubles and trials, in comparison with what Jesus here experienced! And nevertheless, under the slightest grievances I often become discontented with the governance of the Omniscient. How am I covered with shame when I regard my Jesus! Patient, gentle-hearted Jesus, imbue my breast with thy disposition. Let me look up to thee, if I should grow faint in the combat with sin, become slow to do good, impatient under thy decrees, or refractory under thy guidance. The glorious issue of thy calamities inspires me with the cheering hope that my woes shall also end in victory. In me also wilt thou evince that thy ways are the best, and that thy pleasure is holy and good, however unjust it may appear to my perverted understanding. On this hope my soul reposes. I know that through thy pangs thou hast procured comfort and ease even for my hours of probation. Thy prayer will obtain effect and acceptance for my sighs: thy triumph will render my battle light; and the angels that invigorated thee will also bring me refreshment and balm.

How rich in precept and in encouragement is thus to me, O Jesus, the dreadful portraiture of thy mental agonies! I

will never forget them, but impress them deeply on my heart, and for ever praise thee, that thou hast suffered for me at Gethsemane.

MARCH 4.

Peter and Judas, or Self-confidence condemned.

PERHAPS I think within myself, that I should be incapable of exercising such treachery towards Jesus as Peter and Judas were guilty of. Perhaps it appears to me an easy matter to be more resolute under temptation, and more invincible against the attacks of the lust of gold than these disciples were. But do I well know the depth of my own heart? Alas! it is for me but too possible to fail under such trials! A few temporal advantages need only to beckon to me, a scoffer need only to taunt me, a small number of difficulties incident to the profession of a Christian need only to assail me, and I shall be as speedily overcome as Peter, and may sin as grievously as Judas! Did I consider this, I should be more on my guard in the practice of virtue; I should always remain conscious of my innate feebleness, and never give room in my imagination to a foolish presumption on my own firmness; I should watch and pray without ceasing, and constantly be mindful, according to the words of my Saviour, how weak, notwithstanding all the willingness of my spirit, my flesh is!

Yes, in all humility will I confess it: my flesh is weak, my heart corrupted, and my ability exceedingly small. I cannot withstand temptations, if the power of Jesus himself does not support me. O, how often already have I been faithless and fickle in the resolutions which I had formed to oppose evil, and to devote myself to what is good! I live in a world where innumerable seductions may shake my steadfastness, and I must have higher aid than my own not to fall beneath them. O God, let not my passions, let not sin separate me from thee! And should I be so lost as to depart from thee, let me as sincerely weep over my unfaithfulness as Peter did, and be as much comforted through thy

love as he felt himself; and then remain as uninterruptedly true to thee as he afterwards was.

Ah! how sorrowful should I be at the view of so many dangers which menace my virtue, at the thought of so many snares that are laid for my perdition, at the contemplation of so many trials that in this life are prepared for my endurance, if I could not establish my trust in thy grace and in thy protection! Look down upon me, most merciful Jesus, when I shall be ready to yield in the contest with sin, and let me be prompted, by my affection towards thee, to mourn over my iniquity, and to turn back to thee full of repentance. I know that thou wilt even again this day be engaged in promoting my amendment, through thy Spirit, and seek to draw me to thee through the multiplied evidences of thy tenderness. O! let not this operation of thy mercy be in vain. Through many a blessing, through the meditation of thy word, through the testimony of my own conscience, and through the force of truth, wilt thou strive to bring me nearer to thee: O that thy work may not be frustrated in me! Let me hear when thou speakest; follow when thou callest; and with a contrite, broken, and believing heart, turn back to thee, when thou regardest me. How oft wilt thou put to me this inquiry, Dost thou love me? Let me then also reply to thee, with as much sincerity, as much feeling, as much joy as Peter, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

MARCH 5.

Glorying in the Cross.

Who can otherwise than with deepest woe regard the wrongs which Jesus was compelled to endure from brutal and spiteful men; he, who was so worthy to be adored from the very soul, and honoured in the highest degree? How barbarously cruel is it to regard unlimited love with ingratitude, to be pitiless at the spectacle of the most horrible martyrdom, to scoff at the most profound and consolatory truths; and, amid such expressive memorials of mercy, not to see, not to feel,

not to be wholly transported into amazement and veneration! So base a disposition of mind were scarcely credible, did not even our own times present to us the saddest evidences of its reality. Alas! I often see my Saviour loaded with such insults as he was forced to endure in the days of his tribulation. He himself is indeed exalted above every attack; but how often are his divine and great mission and doctrine debased? how often is his holy name uttered without awe and without affection? What true follower of Jesus can behold without sorrow that to the cunning of the world the cross of Jesus is an offence and a folly? that, struck with thick darkness, these, in their blind conceits, slight the Ransomer, because they think that they require no ransom? O ye, my unhappy brethren, would that by my tears I might be able to move you; by my prayers to reform you; and by my conduct to teach you, how infinitely wise is that gospel which ye decry!

Yes, ye may go on in your blindness, and continue to be foes to the cross! I for my part will so much the more loudly boast of this cross by you despised; so much the more zealously acknowledge my Jesus; so much the more cheerfully, through my reverence, love, and fidelity, glorify him. I will lead you—O that ye may follow!—I will lead you to this crucified Jesus, show you his tortures, his streaming blood, his wounded body, his indescribable anguish, and his kindness without end: show you how this sacrificed Lamb prays for you, blesses you, and opens for you the portals of the skies; and then shall I see whether you can longer restrain from worshipping him, magnifying him, adoring him. And will the sinner remain thankless and insensible? O! then must that strict judgment, to which he is so near, affright him; that blood, which cries out against him for vengeance, must terrify him; that Judge, whom he shall one day see in this same Jesus, whom he contemns, must shake him with alarm.

As for me, however, O Jesus, the contemplation of thy sufferings comforts and confirms me; thy blood, which thou hast shed, blesses me; the expectation of thy judgment cheers me. Never will I be ashamed of thy gospel, but it shall be my chief honour that I know thee, and can celebrate thy labours of compassion. In these sentiments strengthen

me, O my Redeemer, and guard my heart, that it allow not itself to be misled by the example of the impious, but until death rest truly and constantly devoted to thee. Though many separate from thee, both on the right and on the left, grant me the power to remain by thee unalterably, to confess thee before the face of thy enemies, and, above all, never through levity or unbelief to deny thee. Lo! with the commencement of this day I make in thy presence a vow of everlasting attachment to thee.

MARCH 6.

Resolution to follow Jesus.

I WILL follow Jesus: this resolution is the most proper that my soul can form. Love, gratitude, obedience—all bind me to follow my Saviour, and to exert myself to be admitted into his community. But when at the same time I consider the worthiness of him whose follower I ought to be, and the blessedness which is connected with his service, this vocation appears to me of a description the most dignified and desirable. And what then prevents me from exercising its duties? The difficulties, perhaps, which are inseparable from them. It is true that, in following him, I must dispense with many transient pleasures, renounce many apparent advantages, sacrifice to him, if required, whatever I hold dearest on earth, and keep myself prepared for numerous hardships. But still the delights which attend this oblation to Christ far compensate all that unpleasantness at which the flesh is apt to shudder. How sweet is it to experience in the fellowship of the Saviour that tranquillity of soul, those joys amid the world's tumultuous troubles, and that peace, passing all understanding, with which Jesus endows his votaries! How sweet is it to be able to say with Paul, "I know in whom I trust, and am certain that he can keep for me my celebration till that day! How sweet is it when, at the close of his life, a man can strengthen himself with this reflecti n: I have been like to Jesus in his degradation, now henceforth for evermore shall I be like to him in his exaltation; I have

followed him through rough and dark ways, now shall I follow him in the path of joy and glory; I have borne his cross, now will this cross be my triumph and felicity! Take to thyself courage, Christian heart! only a few minutes yet remain, only a short contest is yet to be surmounted by thee, only a small burden hast thou yet to carry, ere thou fully experience the happiness of belonging to the train of Jesus. Daily renew thy determination to dedicate thyself to thy Redeemer. When around thee on every side, obstacles, allurements, and enticements, conspire to render thee of a wavering mind—then, Christian, be a hero, and fight for thyself a free passage through all difficulties. Gather under the cross of Jesus ever fresh encouragement and new vigour for thy Christian calling. Look upon his invincible heroism, his steadfastness, which no tortures can shake, his obedience with which he so readily bows to the mandate of his Father. But contemplate also his victory and the termination of his griefs. So as he is, shalt thou according to thy debasement be lifted up. So as he did, shalt thou at length exclaim: "It is finished."

Surely, therefore, I must resolve in my soul to become like to Jesus! Though all his redeemed should forsake him, and he should then ask me: And thou whom I have so dearly loved and rendered so happy and so blessed, wilt thou also go from me? I would answer with decision and rapture, "Whither shall I go? Thou hast the words of everlasting life." No, never will I depart from thee.

MARCH 7.

Victory over Death and the Grave.

O! THAT I might die as died the JUST ONE, who through his death redeemed the world; that I might die with that pure and holy consciousness of rectitude, which my Saviour felt, with that firm belief in an eternal life, with that unresisting resignation to the will of the celestial Father, which Jesus manifested! O! that I might one day be able like him to commend my spirit into the hands of the Almighty,

who bestowed it! Therefore will I, that I may die tranquil and happy, keep close watch over my heart; that it condemn me not in my last hour, I will observe the stirrings and warnings of my conscience; that it accuse me not, when my expiring breath only lingers yet an instant ere it vanish, I will do good and weary not, while it is yet the day, lest the night, in which no man can work, surprise me in slothful indolence, or light-minded carelessness. I will work out my salvation with fear and trembling. Thus, whenever God calls me, I shall be bold to comfort myself with the trust that the crucified SON hath made my peace also with the FATHER; hath eradicated my guilt, and obtained for me the immortality of heaven. Thanks be to the Lord, who even on me has bestowed the victory over death and the grave, through Jesus Christ! "It is finished!" ejaculated my Saviour, as he bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost; finished is the stupendous labour of redemption; finished is the sacrifice for the sins of the world; finished is the conquest over the powers of darkness!

O! that when my earthly day's work shall likewise shortly be completed, I may cease from my labour, like Jesus, in the congratulating conviction, that my memory will survive amid blessings, my name be uttered with thankfulness and regret by all those whom God has entrusted to my care or confided to my esteem!—O! that I may not at the extremity of my life have cause to groan over its lost and squandered years, over my own impenitent and incorrigible heart! Strengthen me, my God and Father, that I may be faithful to thee even unto the end; create in me a pure mind, and vouchsafe to me an understanding spirit. I will not cease to strive against iniquity, and pray, till the period of my pilgrimage is fulfilled. Constantly will I retain Jesus before my eyes, in his obedience, in his truth, in his consummation; and never forget what gratitude I owe him for his death, and how incumbent a duty is it upon me to praise him both with my body and my soul.

MARCH 8.

Instigation to Self-amendment through the Contemplation of the holy Life of Jesus.

Ought not every glance which I direct inwardly upon myself, every consolation which I feel under the accusations of my conscience, and every encouragement furnished through faith to my feeble heart; ought not all this to remind me of that Divine Sufferer who won for me on the cross everlasting salvation? Ought it not to enliven and confirm my grateful reverence towards my Redeemer? Ought it not to restrain me from every sin, establish me in all good? For then only do I belong to the redeemed of Christ, when I work my reformation with an active zeal, when I tire not in well doing. And what should draw forth this ardour in my breast more strongly, than the contemplation of the hallowed walk of my Saviour? He hath left me an example that I might follow his footsteps. Therefore will I think of his disinterested and spotless brotherly love, whenever selfishness and avarice take possession of my heart. I will call to remembrance his immovable fidelity, when inconstancy assails me; his mildness, when anger prompts me to wickedness; his indulgence and coolness, when the errors of my fellow-men lead me into vehemence of temper; his indefatigableness, when the toils of my profession render me discontented; his fortitude, when I feel despondent and pusillanimous because of the embarrassments of life; his trust in his God, when, weak in spirit, I would cast away comfort, and would despair. And lastly, when my soul is overwhelmed and in trouble at the prospect of death, then, shall the Crucified Eternal stand manifest to my sight, arrayed in his firmness and tranquillity of mind. I will suffer as he suffered; hope as he hoped; obey unto death; and die as he died, in believing confidence in my God and my Father.

MARCH 9.

Christ's Agony on the Cross.

"My God! why hast thou forsaken me?" So great was the agony of the expiring Redeemer, that, overpowered by

anguish, this is the complaint into which he broke forth! So poignant were his pangs, that his soul at length, as it were, for a moment forgot its composure, its confidence, its constancy! Yet only for a moment did Jesus feel this failure of heart; soon did his spirit recover its wonted magnanimity, and triumph over the sensations of the body. Thus even in the dismay and in the weakness of his human nature was he a pattern to those who by the decrees of God are doomed to endure; for he fortified himself through his faith, his charity, and his hope. His faith that he was now returning to God, and that this death completed the task of salvation, gave him courage and vigour; his charity towards his adopted brethren made him steadfast and strong; the hope that under the protection of God his work would remain, and ensure the blessings of holiness to the latest posterity, cheered him when the terrors of death smote him to the quick. It seemed to him only for an instant, while torture unnerved him, as though he were abandoned by the Lord, then did his pious devoted spirit forthwith vanquish all corporeal pangs and distress, and through this victory was Jesus already glorified in death; for herein did he evince the amazing worthiness and divine energy of his soul; herein was rendered visible the higher than mortal aid, supported by which he suffered and struggled. His soul conquered, while the fragile fabric of the body crumbled into ruin; it already lived in heaven, while the flesh combated with death's last misery. Christ hath taken away the power of death! Thanks be to God, who hath laid death prostrate even at our feet, through our Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore though both my soul and body languish; still art thou my God and my Father, the consolation of my heart and my portion! still art thou my stay, O Saviour of mankind! What should I fear since my heart is consecrated to thee, by thee is supported and comforted? To thee will I live, to thee also will I die!

MARCH 10.

The Glory of Heaven.

If with such powerful assistance as I possess towards the attainment of my salvation, I strove not patiently in good works after eternal life; if with that glorious prospect which my faith opens to me of a second existence of retribution, I did not wisely employ the period of preparation which is now allotted to me, I were unworthy of the blessings which the gospel of Jesus offers to me, unworthy of the Redeemer, who for my immortal welfare yielded himself up a prey to death. He became a pilgrim on the earth, he cast off the felicity which he might without interruption have enjoyed in the mansions of his Father, and took upon himself instead the most exquisite sufferings. This was the way in which he returned to his glory, and obtained for me those great delights, which await me in heaven. I should more gratefully estimate these services of my Redeemer, if the contemplation of heaven made as strong an impression on my mind as the world and its vain gratifications. But in the enjoyment of carnal benefits, I forget my loftier destination, my true greatness, my celestial hopes, and the incorruptible treasures on high. Yes, I even forget him who has brought me to my present state of happiness; at least, I love him neither so fervently nor so tenderly as his love towards me requires.

O! if I more frequently considered the grandeur of that New Jerusalem which is reserved for the saints, and the boundless immensity of the pleasures of heaven; more highly should I value the bestower of these advantages, and less worthy would terrestrial things be deemed of my desire or regard. One slight glance into the splendour of that glory would make me indifferent to all the ravishment of this lower universe, and fill me with rapturous admiration and reverential awe towards my Redeemer.

Look then, my soul, upon the glory that is appointed thee. There wilt thou find other and more deserving objects of thy esteem than the temporal allurements which smile upon thee here. There wilt thou find the surest proofs, the happiest results of the redemption of thy Jesus. Accompanied by

these blissful views, venture this morning into the world. Accustom thyself to regard the world on its proper side, and to act according to the wise maxims of Christianity. A place, where thou art only to rest, to gather fresh strength, and prepare for a more important journey, claims not thy attachment, merits not that thou shouldst make it the main attention of thy travel. However numerous may be the charms which the present life contains for thee, forget not that thou art merely a sojourner, who shall only taste the pleasantness of the earth, never satisfy thyself with it. Break loose from the bonds of sensuality, and from thy lusts, and bestir thyself through the grace of God to prefer in an infinitely higher measure those joys which are in store for thee above. Even here conduct thyself as a denizen of heaven. Be as rich in love, as sincere in mind, as steadfast in virtue, as entirely devoted to God, as those blessed spirits are whose companions thou art to be. Fulfil the will of the Omnipotent as faithfully as the righteous made perfect practise it. The contemplation of heaven must inspire thee, faith in Jesus must to this end endue thee with strength! He that has purchased for thee thy salvation will send thee the means to inherit it.

MARCH 11.

The Christian taught perfect Love by the Pattern and Conduct of Jesus.

Teach me, O Jesus, to love thy life and thy example, in its utmost purity and force. From thee I learn how I ought to love my brethren in wisdom and in truth, and bind them to me by benefits. Thou devotedst all thy hours to well doing. When thou wast about to suffer, thou didst pray beforehand throughout the entire night, that thy soul might be armed with the strong panoply of love towards thy Father in heaven. How affectionately didst thou warn thy disciples against instability under their trials? Thou sawest the flagitiousness of thy betrayer, and immediately thou didst work on his heart! Thou sawest that the woman who anointed

thee was uncharitably blamed; and with the most ardent noble-minded tenderness thou tookest part with her—the sinner that felt true repentance, and raised herself up again from her fall. Thou knowest how salutary to all sincere professors of thy name the continual remembrance of thy death would prove, and how much they would stand in need of being strengthened in godliness and in belief; and with provident love thou didst institute for them a memorial feast of thy passage to the tomb, that thy worshippers might never forget that no one has greater love than this, that he gives up his life for his brethren. With what mildness and compassion didst thou expostulate with thy enemies, and, above all, with the kiss-beguiling traitor! With what tenderness did thy filial heart take care for thy beloved mother, that she might feel comforted and might not be forsaken! O sweet friendship! so long as I can breathe will I remain true to thee, and even in death still will I delight in thee. Ah! that I too, like Jesus in his last hour, might yet rouse a sinner to remorse! Ah! that I too in seasons of trouble might cling to God as though he were my God; that in contented stillness I might disclose to him my latest wishes, and make my complaint to him in my extreme pangs. But thou consoling speech: "It is finished!" how effectually shouldst thou exhort me to accomplish the work which my Father has given me also to perform, that I may then depart out of this toilsome existence into rest. Father, I commend my spirit into thy charge!

Thus blessedly may a man close his life, if he has received a sense of Christ Jesus, a sense of obedience and of love, into his heart. And this sense vouchsafe to me, O Jesus. Earnestly do I wish, like thee, through acts of love and piety, to be able to scatter blessings and happiness around me, and to be the friend of mankind. But thou must confer upon me the ability. Let my life be distinguished by eminent virtues, let me in my distresses present a laudable example of fortitude and patience; finally let me die tranquil and happy! This is all that I ask from thee, and if thou fulfillest my petition, as I trust with confidence thou wilt, O! how blessed a day will this be for me! Then shall I never have cause to be sorry that I have lived to behold it! If so divinely favoured, how joyfully shall I be able to pass this day, even though it were my last!

MARCH 12

The Assistance of God in the fulfilling of the Soul's pious Determinations humbly implored.

How much vigour do I feel for the Christian fight; how much courage and confidence when, full of reverence, I elevate my heart to God, and think of his promise, that he will give his Spirit to them that pray to him for it! Fortified by godliness, I then encounter temptation with a firm mind, and overcome evil with good. I will, therefore, pray incessantly, and with the reliance of an infant on its parent. For, how often have I not already experienced the sweets which the soul tastes that holds converse with God! Yet how often, likewise, have I prayed, without being strengthened, without being established in holiness, without becoming valiant in the combat with sin? For prayer availeth much only when it is earnest. Collect now, therefore, my soul, all thy thoughts. Behold, thou standest before the Lord, who proveth the heart, and searcheth into the recesses of the bosom. Those moments which, in this early hour, thou consecratest to God, will sanctify all the hours of the day, and re-enforce thee with might and alacrity in thy temporal welfare. Look around thee, and see how potent are the allurements of pleasure, how pressing the sins, and how tormenting the cares which thou hast day by day to encounter. What wilt thou oppose to these enemies of thy peace? How wilt thou ward off their attacks, and secure thy tranquillity? However firmly thou mayst be resolved not to yield to iniquity, yet not the less shamefully will thy corrupted heart annihilate all thy best purposes if the grace of God uphold thee not. Approach, therefore, the God of omnipotence, in the consciousness of thy imbecility, and entreat him to grant thee that support which thy pious intentions so imperatively require.

O God! I live in a world of trial, of sin, and of anxiety. How easily am I vanquished when abandoned to my own force? Strengthen, strengthen me with thy help, and rejoice me with thy saving health! Be not far from me when I call upon thee, and hide not thy countenance from me when I pray to thee with fervent zeal. Let me not, through the en-

ticements of the lusts, and through the enchantments of sin, be seduced from thy holy society, and forfeit thy grace. Govern me by thy Spirit, and let me proceed under thy guidance uninterruptedly in the path of sanctity. Conduct me, O thou God of perfect mercy, successfully through all the temptations of this wicked world, and place me at last in front of the throne of thy glory! There will I then laud thee in the thanksgiving songs of the full choir of the elect, and, exalted above all vice and imperfection, serve thee evermore in innocence and righteousness.

MARCH 13.

The Consolation that God is always near us.

My heart's sweetest consolation is the belief that thou, my God, art not far from me—that thou knowest me, and kindly takest heed for me. Yea, thou art present to me with thy help and thy grace, otherwise were I nothing. Thou art everywhere, both nigh and at a distance, else would there be neither day nor night. Guarded by thee, I slept in the past hours of darkness, and at thy command this morning I awoke. And shall I not thank thee, thou guardian of mankind? Yes; by me be thou adored, thou All-beneficent! Ah! what am I among thy countless creatures that thou regardest me so graciously, and dost so much good to me beyond others? And how poor, how weak, are the best thanks which a mortal can pay to thee! But is then the praise of an angel sufficiently great and exalted, when I compare it with the perfections and with the benefits of the Creator? Still, however unworthy my laudings may be, I yet dare to trust, that thou listenedst well-pleased to the voice of my heart, and considerest not so much the offering itself as the rectitude of mind with which I consecrate it to thee. Yet, O! that I could duly honour thee! For who is there so great, so infinitely perfect, so inconceivably good as thou art! But I well comprehend, that while I live here in this imperfect state, I cannot expect the fulfilment of my wish. In heaven, when I shall possess a more extensive knowledge

of thee, and a wholly sanctified heart, there shall I worship thee more meetly. In the meanwhile, this must continue my endeavour, that so long as I live on earth I may magnify thee rather through my life than through my words. Be it my joy to converse and commune with thee in prayer; to contemplate thy benefactions; and in all that I speak, think, or do, to extol thee. According to these sentiments, grant that I may this day live, and hallow it to thy service, and to thy honour. Lord! guide me by thy Spirit in the right way. Give me grace to turn every hour of the present day to a profitable account, to enjoy it innocently, and in such wise to pass it, as I shall this evening, and yet more at the night-fall of my existence, wish it had been spent.

From thee, O my God, all that I have proceeds; from thee, with cheerful reliance, I anticipate all that I can desire, all that I need, and whatever is fitted to render me happy. Vouchsafe to me thy compliance with my petitions for thy Son's, thy beloved's, sake. May his example inspire me, that I may serve thee every day of my life in holiness and righteousness! In thy name, thou Sovereign of my life, I commence this day. I abandon myself entirely to thy guidance and gracious government. Solemnly do I vow to live to thee alone, and that for thee I will renounce all iniquity. Further me in this disposition with thy divine succour, and maintain me now and evermore in thy grace.

MARCH 14.

Trust and Faith in the Lord.

O God! thou who keepest the heart, how blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no deceit! How confidently can they who have an upright heart rejoice in thee! For these thy consolations are innumerable and unequivocal, precious, and full of loveliness. Thanks be rendered to thee, O Father of heaven and earth, that through thy Son thou hast unfolded thy will even to the most simple, though so many of the carnally wise have rejected it. Receive my thanksgiving, I beseech thee, that thou hast deemed even me worthy to know

thy saving doctrine. I enjoy an incalculable pre-eminence over the many millions of men who have been born in ignorance and superstition. I have learned the truth of the gospel from my youth upwards, and have had numerous opportunities of confirming myself in it. May this good fortune be of more import to me than if thou hadst enriched me with crowns and empires for a birthright! What would all the splendid misery of the earth indeed avail me, if I could not hope to obtain after this life another and a far better property? That I know thee, my God and my Saviour, and that I have the expectancy of becoming one day an heir of thy kingdom—this is, to me, of incalculably greater interest than anything the world can either give to me or promise me. Therefore shall it be my busiest effort to engraft still deeper and deeper in my heart faith in thee, and in him whom thou hast sent; and to be faithful to thee, as the Father of mercy and the God of all comfort. Here do thy goodness and thy kindness break in upon me in streams of light. O! how dear are they to the careworn and to such as are desolate of aid! How many hearts in the clay-built hut, under heavy losses, in poverty, in the very anguish of death, have been refreshed, and brought to rest through thy gospel! Yes, when hear thy voice, O Jesus, thou who invitest to thee all who are heavy laden, I take courage, and become more determined and cheerful than all the excitements which the world can bestow could render me.

How greatly comforts my heart the belief that thou takest cognizance of me, and that I pursue my mortal career under thy Almighty protection! When soul and body faint, thou art my portion and my trust; thou art my shepherd, my father, my friend, my shield, my consolation! I will love thee with all my might. With man there are oft pride and imbecility; with thee there is nought save humility and love, nought save mastery and intelligence. With man the most ingenuous motive is often misconstrued and condemned; but thou lookest with approbation into the guiltless breast. I cast myself upon thee, who, through Jesus, art become my reconciled Father. Thou wilt not disappoint my hope, not even when all trust in human assistance is vain. Verily in the shades of death wilt thou afford me light, and dry up my tears in the decisive crisis of mortality. Thy Son, who was

himself dragged like a lamb to the slaughter, will also take compassion upon me if I tread in his footsteps. And that Jerusalem which is above will usher me into the fulness of joy! O! how glorious is this hope! How much more does it delight me than though I had in foresight all the wealth and all the felicity of the habitable globe! I lose myself in the contemplation of thy mercy, O my God! Eternally, eternally shall my soul be full of thy praise. For everlasting art thou my dependence, my God, and my strength! How blessed is the man who entrusteth himself to thee! How blessed is he to whom thou manifesteth thy pity!

MARCH 15.

Gratitude for the inestimable Advantages of being born a Christian.

I PRAISE thee, O Lord God, that thou hast vouchsafed even to me the happiness of being a Christian. I thank thee that thou didst not permit me to be born and live among infidel, barbarous, and savage nations, but among the professors of thy name. I thank thee that thou hast allowed me to be consecrated through baptism to thy worship, and for the in struction through which I have been trained up to my sacred vocation. I know him in whom I believe, and I know that he who fears God, and does good, is acceptable unto him. I know how holy thy commandments are, and see daily new proofs of their beauty and their purity. I love thy law, O God, and though I have already in so many instances, been caught in transgression, still is my chief desire only this—to become well pleasing to thee and to merit thy blessing. But how often does the foolishness of my heart render me undeserving of thy favour! how often do I sin against thee, and feel that I am no more worthy to be called thy child! O! then enlighten and amend me through the efficacy of thy Spirit! The more I perceive the charms of virtue, the more let my heart be inclined to it; the longer I practise it, the more easy, the more certain, the more amiable let it appear to me. Let Jesus Christ live in my soul! Let his spirit become my

spirit, his way to glory be also for me a trodden path, in which I may follow with pleasure. Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. Let not, therefore, this love be merely an empty, though sweet, idea; but let me actually show it through the fidelity with which I serve thee, through the zeal with which I publish thy fame, through the cautiousness with which I eschew evil. Aid me to be a Christian, and to do honour to my creed under all circumstances. Let me in solitude, as well as in society; in youth, as well as in old age; among the scorners, as well as among the cherishers of the gospel; in the days of adversity, as well as in the time of prosperity, walk worthily of that Christian profession to which I am chosen. Let me in body and in soul, in life and in death, be devoted to thee. How attractively do the sufferings which thou hast undergone for me, the example which thou hast left for me, and the promise which thou hast given to me, engage me to these duties! So will I then, even to-day, labour with the strictest attention to bring about my own improvement, keeping always before my eyes thy pattern, O my Redeemer!

Thus I shall deeply and gratefully acknowledge the happiness of being a Christian, and make this lot the object of my diurnal thanksgivings. Thus I shall shame the enemies of the cross of Jesus, and convince them through the fact, more than through all arguments, that a Christian is of all men the wisest, the most virtuous, and the most felicitous.

MARCH 16.

Thanks for the Refreshment and Repose of the past Night.

How many behold the morning ere they have yet found rest. They thought as Job, "Our bed will comfort us;" but they are either rendered languid through dreams and cares, or have tossed about sleepless from their pains. They longed after refreshment, and received it not! Ah! do thou, O God of comfort, console this numerous family of misfortune, who are thus constrained to groan at beholding this day! In thy presence I remember my own unworthiness, and that I as little

merited as they the refreshing sleep of the past night. Let me not, Lord, throughout this day forget that thou hast especially loved me in preference to many thousands. Praised be thy goodness and thy faithfulness. O! that these, thy attributes, might be glorified and adored by all the sick who now feel relief, by all the sorrowful, whose vital spirits have recovered themselves, and by all the healthful and the animated.

The good man goes to his work in order to become useful to the world; he wishes not merely to exist and enjoy; he desires to live, and be worthy of the benefit of life. And I—shall I longer delay? No; I will hasten and exercise the profession in which the providence of God has cast my lot. How much shall I find to do to-day, whereby I may be able to promote the honour of the Lord, and the welfare of society! Bestow upon me and mine, O God, health and strength, that each of us, according to his capacity, may perform that which thou hast prescribed to him. But, above all, vouchsafe to me, I entreat thee, the power to live in conformity with my higher than earthly destination. If I be mindful of my dignity and final appointment, I shall not so far yield up my reason to worldly concerns as to neglect for them the dearer interests of my soul. Teach me to act according to thy will, and to watch with foresight, that I may neither stumble nor fall.

It is my heart's desire and vow this day to serve thee anew, and by thee to be approved. I am thy creature, thy redeemed, and, through Jesus, an inheritor of life everlasting. I am in so many ways thy bankrupt debtor in gratitude, that it would be with me an offence claiming the most condign punishment, were I not willing to devote myself to thee. Let these sentiments remain during the entire day indelibly graven on my soul, and myself be strenuously excited by them to direct my conduct, in implicit obedience to thee as thy child, and an aspirant after heaven in genuine piety. Thus will my life be rendered full of contentment and supremely happy. I shall not then lament because of dissatisfaction and misery, or strive after possessions that can afford me no real felicity. I shall not have occasion to be alarmed at dangers, nor to be anxious about the future. Everything will conspire for the best, and must of necessity advance that great end which

thou projectedst when thou commandedst me to come forth from the womb into light. Even the last and most terrible enemy, death, will not affright me, but seem only a means of my eternal joy and blessedness. In this manner I can face every destiny, with a cheerful heart, and continually rejoice in thy kindness.

MARCH 17.

The Joys of the Kingdom of Jesus.

How invaluable are the blessings in which, as the subject of the all-beneficent and omniscient Ruler, I every day participate. In Jesus' kingdom prevail freedom, peace, and bliss: freedom from he servitude of sin, and from the yoke of the passions; peace, lasting and undisturbed; and the bliss of faith, of charity, and hope. In Jesus' kingdom vice has no sway, iniquity no dominion. In Jesus' kingdom reign uninterrupted unity and unfeigned love; for all his vassals are children of God, and therefore brethren: all have one faith, one hope, one reliance. In Jesus' kingdom there is no misery and no wailing, no anguish and no sorrow; for he mightily defends through his word and Spirit the dwellers of his realm from the wretchedness of guilt, and from the griefs of remorse; he heals their pains through his pitying tenderness, cheers them in every distress by his promises; he makes them feel exhilarated and contented, even when they are forced to suffer through the assurance that heaven will fully idemnify them for everything.

Therefore, it is my pride, my joy, and my boast, to live in this kingdom, and to be a true servant of my Redeemer. Daily will I then ponder on the offices due from me to my generous Master, the faithful Shepherd of his flock;—on the gratitude and fealty which I swore to him when I threw myself under his sceptre;—on that submission to his sage ordinances, through which I am deemed worthy of his protection;—on the fidelity which I ought, in all situations of life, to maintain towards him, following his footsteps, and keeping his commandments before my eyes during the whole

course of my existence;—on the veneration which belongs to him the Holy One and the Exalted, in obeisance to whom the knees of all shall bow themselves, because God has given him a name which is over all names. Yes, till my heart break will I steadfastly and uprightly revere thee, my King, and my Saviour; voluntarily submit myself in humility to thy will; and proclaim thy renown, praise thy love, adore thy wisdom.

MARCH 18.

The Shortness of Life.

Myself a finite being, I can form no conception of eternity; though I were to add together the most enormous numbers, and heap myriads upon myriads of centuries, still should I have no apprehension of endless time. But even this incomprehensibleness and unmeasurableness of its duration fill me with sacred awe, and become a spur to me to strive with patience and good works after immortality. Should I not be able immediately to convince myself of the happiness of the righteous, so will I the more frequently consider the testimonies of the holy scriptures, and through these seek to obtain for myself greater certainty. Is heaven still to me an unknown land, so will I the more attentively look to my God and my Redeemer, with whom this my celestial portion is. I will consider the great preparatives which Jesus has made to bring me into the possession of it; I will represent to my heart the inexplicable labours which he undertook to provide for me, a state which cost him so many sighs and tears, and so bitter a death. How prodigious must that felicity be, which the Lord himself could acquire for me only through so grievous a struggle!

Does the time linger tediously to me ere I shall arrive at the goal of my race, then must my soul, by anticipation, transport itself into this everlasting eternity. When I shall yonder have spent a million years—and this must one day be the case—O! how small and insignificant a period will the most protracted mortal existence appear! Yet it is not once necessary that I should expatiate so far into the future in or-

der to be persuaded of the shortness of my life. I need only bethink me how speedily have fled the years which I have already lived. I need only reflect how many of my fellow-mortals will this day reach the boundary of their earthly career, and sink into the grave. And perhaps I, who least imagine it, am also one of the multitude who shall this day be devoted to the sepulchre. My sound body warrants to me no surety that I shall outlive the present day. Many who awake this morning as healthy as I am will never see the evening! Do I not, from time to time feel certain disorders and infirmities in my constitution, which give me silent warnings that I ought with very little dependence to promise myself a long series of years to come? O! how can I acknowledge all this, and yet be so full of frivolity, yet cling so fast to temporal advantages?

But so is the weakness of my heart ordered. All my convictions of the nearness of death make only a feeble impression on my soul. I am encompassed by mortals, I am even sensible that I myself am mortal, and yet I act as though I had no reason to contemplate my latter end with seriousness. I prize my respite as little as though I expected here in this world an eternity.

Stamp then these truths indelibly upon my mind, that I may at length become wise. Teach me to recollect that this life is nothing, and the next everything. Quicken my faith, that those things which are invisible to my corporeal eye may be visible to my spirit, and that in comparison with them I may despise whatever is visible on earth. Let my heart be there where my incorruptible treasures are laid up, and thither let me direct all my cares and endeavours that it may be well with me for ever.

MARCH 19.

The Different Effects of God's Universal Presence and Universal Knowledge as they regard the Good and the Impious Man.

THAT God is omnipresent and omniscient is a frightful thought for those who do the works of darkness. How must the

profligate tremble when he reflects that God sees the abomination which is committed in privacy; that before him all iniquities are disclosed, however they may remain concealed from the eyes of men! How must he be confounded when he considers that God knows by what crooked ways, and by what unprincipled means he has erected himself to eminence; that the Lord beholds the hidden malice, the impure flames, the secret lusts, and the inmost speculations of his heart! And when he then considers that this God, to whom all the criminality of the guilty bosom lies revealed, has unlimited power to make blessed, or to render accursed, and that no man can flee from his wrath—O! how must the sinner shudder at the idea!

But, however terrible the consideration of the universal presence and universal knowledge of the Deity must be to the wicked, equally consolatory is it for thee, who walkest with fear and holiness before the face of the Almighty! Consolatory is it for thee, in all that may disturb thee. Art thou slandered or uncharitably judged? How delightful it is when thou art able to say, with Job, "My witness is in heaven!" Art thou oppressed with difficulties, wherein thou knowest not how to counsel thyself? Art thou abandoned by thy friends, and findest no help? What a comfort is it when thou rememberest that in thy God thou hast the stanchest friend, and one who never will forsake thee! When calamities pour in upon thee, on every side, how soothing it is to thy distressed feelings, if thou canst tranquillize thyself with this conviction, that he in whose hands both fortune and misfortune are placed, and who orders all things for the welfare of his children, is near thee! When thou callest in secret on thy God, O! how must it confirm thee in thy faith, when thou recollecteth that he hath regard to thy prayer, and understandeth the inmost sighings of thy heart! When thou unknown to the world sympathizest with the destitute, how must it rejoice thee, that God observes thy unostentatious benevolence, and numbers the benefits which thou scatterest in silence! When, given over by all human skill, thou shalt one day lie extended on the bed of fatal malady, how easy then also must thy transition out of life be rendered to thee, when thou art assured that God and Jesus are beside thee, that they behold thy struggles in nature's ir-

remediable extinction, and are ready to relieve thee from all ill! Now, Lord God, vouchsafe to me the grace, that I may appertain to that happy company who are able to comfort themselves and rejoice in thy attributes, and whom the thought affrights not, that thou art not far distant from every one of us. May a holy terror of thy continual presence be made to penetrate me, when sin attacks me with its wiles and enchantments! But be this thy diffusion through all space likewise my trust and my hope under all the adversities of life. Art thou for me, who shall be against me? Art thou at my right hand, then I shall continue well.

MARCH 20.

God's Glory, Greatness, and Mercy.

God of Majesty! thy glory covereth all the ends of the earth, and spreadeth itself through all the heaven of heavens. I contemplate thy supremacy with reverence and adoration, and the more I meditate upon it, the more I perceive its incomprehensibleness and its boundlessness. O! how can I, grovelling in the dust, honour thee, since even the angels are too mean to praise the immensity of thy domination according to its desert! How noble hast thou made thy name in the universe! So many thousands of worlds, which thou hast called forth; so many millions of creatures, which are the works of thy hands; so many miracles of skill and goodness, with which the globe is replenished, testify thy wisdom and declare thy excellence! And I myself, vile and wretched as I am, I am an evidence of thy power, and a subject of thy exaltation. In me, who am of so small account, hast thou enlarged thy fame. In me thy kindness magnified itself, while I was yet unformed; ere yet I received my being was thy mercy employed for my welfare. I entered into the world, and thou commenced for me the epoch, wherein every day, every hour, every moment, became distinguished through thy governance. Now thus long have I inhabited the earth, and thy goodness and thy compassion ever endure over me. I see days elapse and years take flight, yet thy

mercy passes not away, but is every day renewed. Every rising sun, which publishes to me the vastness of thy empire, publishes also to me the inexhaustible resources of thy tenderness, which supplies life and breath to all creatures. My existence too hast thou maintained till this instant. Therefore do I worship thee in this hour of dawn, and sing forth thy name, which is so wondrous and glorious. Lord, to whom all the hosts of the skies pay homage, listen also to me, the humblest of thy creatures, and let the voice of my supplication find thy attentive ear!

Magnify thyself, as thou hast hitherto done, still longer in me. O! who else can bless me, watch me, guide me, enrich me with grace, save thou, benignant, omnipotent, merciful Father? Turn not, therefore, away from me thy pity, nor deprive me of the comforting thought that thou art propitious to me. Render me fitting to glorify thee in all things. Through my whole life, through my conversation, through my sufferings, and even through my death itself, will I exalt thee, O thou the Holy and the Good! Make me likewise an instrument of thy glory to others, and let me desire nothing so earnestly as that thy name may be always more and more sanctified, and thy kingdom further and further extended. To this purpose let me devote all the opportunities which thou grantest to me, and employ all the faculties both of my body and my soul. Thus shall I arrive at the dignity of being held worthy by thee to be accepted into thy eternal kingdom. Take me thither, O God of all mercy, for the sake of Jesus, my Saviour, through whom is my claim to this grace!

MARCH 21.

The Christian Pilgrim entreats the Saviour to lead him on his Way

Lord, my God, I enter again upon a new day of my journey to eternity. Thou hast placed me as a pilgrim in the world, where I am not always to remain, but only to make myself ready for a better life. How sorrowful am I often, when I

consider the difficulty of my passage, the disagreeableness of the way, the corruption of my heart, and the weakness of my faculties! How easily may it happen that I shall fall into error, and lose sight of the home to which I hasten! Ah! how many who before me have pursued this path, have allowed themselves to be induced by its asperities, and the example of the ungodly, to return back! And I fear, since my heart is so weak, and the temptation to evil so strong, that I also may decline from the track which I ought to keep. But, O Jesus, thou who wast likewise a pilgrim on earth, stay by my side, and let me not swerve from the path which is prescribed to me, into the way of sin and misery.—The deceits of the world may entice me! I will withstand them by thinking of the blessings that are prepared for me as thy follower. The great multitude may become false to thee! I will be among the small number of thy faithful worshippers. My own heart may seduce me! Thou art more powerful than my spoiled heart, and thy example more efficacious than all the lusts of the world. The valley of death, through which I walk, may affright me!—Let me only behold behind it a glimpse of that city of which I shall one day be the eternal inhabitant, and my courage will no longer fail.

Truly I shall not always be a passing stranger. My wanderings will at last have an end: I shall arrive at that country of my own, which is destined to me in heaven. On this let me reflect, if ever the duration of my pilgrimage should appear long to me, and with this prospect let me cheer myself under all the cares of existence, that I may even here through belief in thee, O Christ, enjoy a portion of my celestial prerogative. Here I am already blessed. I feel here already a part of that felicity which shall afterwards, above, recompense my efforts and my perseverance. May the love of the Father, and the grace of Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost strengthen me! I experience already on earth the effects of the divine approbation, and the consolation of the world to come.

Fortified by these views I will steadfastly proceed during the few days of my remaining time in the path of trial and self-denial, and constantly exercise myself in those duties which will hereafter constitute my occupation and my joy.

Be my course, my desire, my hope, and my pleasure in heaven! Dear to me above all shall be the blessings and the privileges which thou, my Saviour, hast obtained for me, and never will I forfeit them through faithlessness towards thy sacred commandment, or through indolence in the work of self-amendment. Grant that through humility and love I may become like to Jesus! And then, when I am at the close of my course, then conduct me, O God, as a denizen of thy kingdom, to that most perfect fruition of bliss which my faith has anticipated.

MARCH 22.

God's Beneficence beyond all Recompense.

If I reflected as zealously on the kindness of God as David did, then should I under all, even the apparently smallest evidences of the graciousness of my Creator, exclaim with the monarch-bard: "How shall I recompense the Lord for all the benefits which he doth to me?" Besides, on a careful consideration of my life, I shall find everywhere the memorials of the divine munificence; and if I do not always meet with them in equal abundance, it is only my own inattention, my own want of feeling, and my own ingratitude, that are in fault. No moment elapses in which I do not receive proofs of the bountifulness of my God. And though to his benevolence I owed nothing more than the preservation of my breath, even this seemingly trivial favour deserves my endless thanks. But when can I call to mind a single hour which was void of the beneficence of my God? Even in regard to this brief division of time I am forced to cry out: "How can I recompense the Lord for all the benefits which he doth to me?" And what shall I say of the days, of the years, which I have already lived? Lord, this only can I answer, that I am unworthy of the faithfulness which thou hast evinced towards me, and that I cannot repay thee the multitude of thy favours.

For with what, O Lord, could I make a return to thee for thy mercies? With my thanks, perhaps! Yes, if my

thanks could be as boundless, as ardent as thy love. With my conduct, perhaps! Yes, if I were not a sinful and corrupted being, that without thy support cannot live according to thy pleasure. Perhaps it will be in eternity, when I become like to the angels, that I shall do justice to thy numberless benefactions. But even eternity is too short to extol all thy goodness, and the praise of the angels too weak perfectly to glorify thy name. All the inhabitants, both of heaven and earth, must each make confession, and say: "How shall I recompense the Lord for all the benefits he does to me?" I also will acknowledge this my inability for the exaltation of thy goodness, and, imitating Job, confess: "Lord, I am too vile for all the mercy and truth which thou hast manifested to thy servant."

There is, indeed, no fact more unquestionable than the immensity of God's goodness, and the inferiority of man. Yet, if we regard the behaviour of the greater part of mortals, we might almost doubt of its reality. A large portion of these, through God's mercy, so highly-favoured creatures, permit themselves to be so far seduced by pride, and the ingratitude of their hearts, that they forget their dependence on the Deity, and their own meanness and insufficiency, and would even defy the Lord that made them. For this reason will I ever imprint more and more deeply on my heart, how undeserving I am of all the testimonies of God's graciousness, and how unable I am to offer remuneration even for the least of them. But do thou thyself, O God, engrave these sentiments on my soul, that their impression may always continue to maintain a lively influence over me. At every benefit which I receive from thee, let me, moved by thy goodness, look up to thee as the origin of all my prosperity, and with humility and thankfulness enjoy thy gifts. And the more I perceive how little I am in a situation to requite thy love, the more zealous let me be in thy service. How could I deny thee the offering which thou requirest for thy favours? How should I not rather with gladness sacrifice to thee all that I have and all that I am, and praise thee both by my body and my spirit, which are alike thy property?

MARCH 23.

Mourning over his numerous Transgressions, the Christian supplicates the further Indulgence of his God.

Alas! O God, thou offended Majesty, thou Omnipotent and Omniscient Judge! What else has my life hitherto been, save one continued scene of opposition and rebellion against thee? It is not this or that particular deed which I must now bewail: all my motives, ways, and views, both in what I have done and left undone, have been sinful. My whole soul has been iniquity and unrighteousness. All my thoughts, affections, wishes, and endeavours, all, to my great sorrow, have been entirely estranged from thee. I have acted no otherwise than as if I had hated thee, though of all beings thou art the most worthy of love. I have conducted myself as if I had wished to try thy exceeding patience to the uttermost. My actions have been sinful, and my words still more so. And, O most holy God, how much more corrupt is my heart than either my actions or my words! What an exhaustless source of folly and perverseness is this fickle heart!—a source of inherent perdition, which has already poured its impure streams over the years of my infancy, and over my whole life. Thus I see it is with me, when I consider those things which I am yet able to remember. But how many of my sins have I myself not once remarked? how many have I already forgotten? Only this I know, that the corruption of my heart is extreme, and nearly irremediable.

And yet thy long-suffering hath not ceased! The thought strikes me with admiration! I search after the cause of such inconceivable forbearance, and find none except this: "Thou art God, and not man." Had I, a wicked mortal, been so cruelly wronged, I could not possibly have endured my injuries, for so a great a period, with composure. Had I been a parent, and thus treated, long since should I have driven forth the undutiful child; my natural affections would have been extinguished within me, and my son, the offspring of his cherished mother, would ere now have become loathsome to my sight, had he not rewarded me better than I have done

thee, thou Father of my soul. Yet, thou hast remembered thy wonted indulgence, and hast not pronounced against me the irrevocable sentence of damnation. Still, perhaps, there is hope remaining even for a wretch so iniquitous as I am. O Lord, let me find it in thy sacred gospel, and in thy grace. And if more grief, humiliation, and terror be requisite for my rescue, so let them come upon me, and do thou aid me to bear them. Affright my heart, if thou wilt hereafter rejoice it. Trouble it with afflictions, if thou art only so gracious as again, likewise, to comfort it. But I will not prescribe to thee how thou shalt operate upon my heart. Do thou, O Lord, according to thy wise pleasure. All that thou layest upon me shall be precious to me. Only banish me not out of thy presence, nor take thy good Spirit away from me. Accompany me yet this day with thy paternal love, and thy forgiving mildness, and still seek to snatch my soul out of the destruction in which it is overwhelmed. And if thou in the vastness of thy mercy workest for my reformation, then grant me a willing mind, that opposes not itself to thy efforts. Let me constantly recollect that which most conduces to my peace, and with holy prudence employ the term of my education for heaven.

MARCH 24.

Man's Frailty magnifies God's Compassion.

What indeed am I—I, a poor helpless, perishable mortal—when I compare myself with God's immeasurable creation? How completely do I lose myself in my nothingness, and how deeply is my pride wounded and abashed! A worm, a handful of dust and ashes, that can scarcely resist the gentlest wind, and is yet often so foolish as to set itself up against its Creator. And still, infinite, incomprehensible God, thou concernest thyself for me as thy greatest work. Thy almighty hand, which maintains in motion those orbs of incalculable vastness which roll above me in the regions of space, supports me also. Thy providence, O God, which regulates the destinies of the widest empires, orders likewise

the course of my events. Ah! wherefore dost thou so graciously condescend towards me, who am only a shadow, a mere nonentity? Wherefore art thou so solicitous for the welfare of an insect? Wherefore bearest thou with me for so many years with patience? What gainest thou if my soul is preserved? Thou becomest neither higher nor happier. What losest thou if I sink into perdition? O nought, my Maker and my God! Though I, though all mankind, go to destruction, yet still will the population of thy kingdom embrace countless myriads, who throughout all eternities shall proclaim thy mighty deeds and thy power.

Pause, O my soul, and look with astonishment and awe into the depths of the mercy of God! Love, inconceivable love it is, that moves the Everlasting to regard me, and make me a participator of his blessedness. That blood of the Son of God, through which my atonement has been accomplished, gives me assurance that I am beloved of the Father, and may expect from him a place in heaven. The Lord is good and holy, and his ways are pure kindness and truth to them that keep his covenant and testimony. The Lord be praised, that he governs not according to my imagination, but according to his own wisdom: that he deals not with me after my sins, but according to his mercy. I admire, O my God, with humility and joy, thy sacred counsel to promote my happiness, and am astonished at the magnitude of thy pity. It is inexplicable, that thou, eternal God, shouldst invite me to thy heaven, who am so feeble and so full of sins and vanities; but it would be yet more extraordinary, should I slightly rate this compassion, and despise that heaven which thou offerest to me.

No, with heartfelt emotion do I acknowledge thy kind purposes, and will henceforth strive faithfully to fulfil them. Thou stretchest out to me thy arms; I will rush towards them, and yield myself to be grasped by them. Thou drawest me towards thee; I will follow thy soft attraction. Thou presentest heaven to me; I will hasten thither and despise the earth. Jesus, my Lord and my God! aid me to become worthy of the felicity which thy death has conquered for me.

MARCH 25.

The Salvation of his Soul the only truly important Object of a Christian's Solicitude.

I LIVE in a world with which nature, my duty, and my necessities connect me. But how probable is it that this constant intercourse with terrestrial objects may render me earthly-minded! How easily may I forget that this sphere is not my perpetual abode, nor my final destination! How easily may the appearance of the delight, the grandeur, and the excellence which my senses think to find here deceive me! I see this daily exemplified in many thousands of my fellow-mortals, who permit themselves to be beguiled by carnal advantages, and led away from their true happiness. I will not therefore venture a step into this world without confessing my frailty, and taking my refuge under God's protection. I desire none of thy treasures, O earth: let but my soul, the salvation of my soul, not be lost! If I gain the whole universe, and lose my soul, what would the possession avail me in the hour of death,—before the tribunal of Jesus,—in eternity? For the sake of a fleeting gratification, am I to ruin my lasting inward peace? For the sake of the mastership of the globe itself, should I relinquish heaven?—What madness were this!

No, I will not act so contrarily to reason. No, I will always remember the high dignity of my soul, and only choose those things which are deserving of the desires of an immortal spirit. Should I even lose all else, yet if I save my soul, I am sufficiently rich. How trivial are the things which I must renounce in following Jesus! To perceive their insignificancy, I need not stay for the bed of death to instruct me. I need only feel what it is to be sure of the forgiveness of my sins, to be at peace with God, to have a good conscience, and to be convinced of the certainty of my salvation; for then these benefits will not fail to appear so great to me, that in comparison I shall deem all the glory of the earth as dust. And what would not sinners give to regain these privileges, after they have forfeited them? Though they swayed whole worlds, they would abandon them all to rescue their souls.

I may still preserve my soul; I still live. O then let it be my most assiduous care how I may ensure its safety amid the temptations of this perilous existence. How easily may it happen that I shall even this day bring eternal perdition upon my soul? O God, defend me from this misery! Let the grace and the power of thy Spirit be more potent than all the corruption of my heart. All temporal endowments which are essential to my good, thou, O God, wilt vouchsafe to me. If I only maintain the health of my soul, for me all thy ways will be blessed, all sufferings salutary, and death itself a benefaction. I shall then likewise so much the more tranquilly enjoy all the pleasures of my life, and be able to hold myself assured, under their transitoriness, of this consolation, that better and more permanent felicity is in store for me in eternity.

MARCH 26.

The Blessings of Religion and its Claims.

To religion I owe my entire worth, my whole happiness. In vain do I seek any other source of contentment, of repose, of greatness, of glory, of virtue, and of prosperity. Were it possible that the God whom I adore, and the Redeemer in whom I believe, could be taken away from me, I should be like a man hurled from a kingly throne into a gloomy dungeon; life would be a torment to me, and death frightful and hideous. Of the truth of this idea I am most strongly persuaded. But do I also act according to this conviction? Do I love religion more than all the riches and all the fortune of the earth? Do I herein put my honour and my felicity, to revere God and hold fast the faith in Christ? What? if on one side crowns and jewels are offered to me, and on the other the cross of Jesus stood in view, should I hasten to the latter and spurn the former? If I ingenuously consider my conduct, alas! I must give a very humiliating answer to this question. I recognise, I confess, the extreme value of my faith; but I live as if I had not any. I perceive the sublime tendency of my spirit to wisdom and holiness; yet I act as if it were a mere fantasy. But, O Christian, I conjure thee

by this precious soul, by this so inestimable creed, begin to grow wiser and more righteous. Bestir thyself for the salvation of thy immortal part. For it is impossible to suppose that its acquittal or condemnation can be indifferent to thee. On this globe thou wilt never be able to ensure to thyself happiness. Neither human wisdom, nor incredulity, with all its sophistical reasonings, will advance thee in the way to heaven. Religion alone presents to thee in this endeavour her assistance; she alone can lead thee into the possession of the supreme good. Dost thou acknowledge this verity, so wilt thou regard religion as the first object in the world, thou wilt hold it in honour as the greatest, and thou wilt prize it as the most costly. Desire for thyself above all things the happiness of continuing to be a Christian, and then strive to walk worthily of the same, and to own thy Redeemer before the face of all mankind.

Adorable Saviour! replenish me, I beseech thee, with these godly sentiments, and endue me with grace, that I may even this day make them indeed manifest on all occasions. May I never dishonour, through my actions, thy sacred doctrine and thy divine merits, or through my behaviour give others pretence to defile thy name. In all things, in my service of God, in my profession, in my intercourse with my brethren, in life and in death, I will glorify thy love, through a conscientious and pious demeanour. If I retain this disposition, thou wilt afford me sufficient opportunities of promoting thy honour even in others. I shall then at the close of my pilgrimage be able to look back with satisfaction on my past days, and eventually, depart into that world where religion, which was here my comfort, will constitute my perpetual joy.

MARCH 27.

God addressed as the Searcher of the Heart.

I KNOW, O my God, that thou provest the heart. Thou hast no pleasure in my prayer, when my heart is far from thee: no delight in the thanks-offering which I devote to

thee, when I do not present it with sincerity. Omniscient: I am not rightly acquainted with myself. My passions often conceal from me the evil which is in me, and my self-love hinders me from regarding myself on the proper side. But thou, thou searchest the heart. To thee my most secret purposes, my inmost thoughts are revealed. And how shall I then uphold myself under thy searching? How can a heart which is so cold, so changeable, so prone to wickedness, and so little fond of truth, be agreeable to thee? Ah! I flee to thee, my Jesus; on thy lips and in thy bosom never has deceit been found. Atone through thy righteousness for my falsehood, and purify me from whatever may be displeasing to the Lord. Let thy example and thy grace render me upright and sincere both before God and man; sincere in my faith in thee, that I may not confess thee solely by my expressions, but by my life likewise; sincere in all the exercises of Christianity, that I may become acceptable to the Deity.

To be acceptable to the Deity!—What honour! What happiness! How anxiously do the children of the world strive to be acceptable even to such creatures as they themselves are! With what earnestness do they not labour to make themselves agreeable to their patrons, and to obtain the certainty of their approbation! My efforts and my ambition shall be to please thee, O my God, and to walk before thee in rectitude both of word and deed. Be this my care amidst the concerns of the present day. When I lift up to thee my hands and my heart, O! then will I worship thee in simplicity and truth, and fulfil the vow which I make to thee. And in my connexion likewise with my fellow-men, be distant from me all craft and hypocrisy. Not in form but in reality will I love my brethren. Even to myself will I act candidly, and tacitly own the faults which I have still in me, that I may see my heart in its true light, should self-presumption at any time flatter me.

Thou, O God, knowest my heart. Try me, therefore, and learn what my purposes are. And if now in this hour of the early morning, I resolve upon uprightness and integrity, do thou thyself bestow energy upon my intentions, and let me be as ready to execute, as I am to plan them. Let me walk before thee in perfect singleness of mind, and detest

all those guileful sentiments, which I cannot hide from thee, and which are an abomination in thy sight. Thu shall I also be able to assure myself of the love of mankind, and, what to me must be most dear, thou wilt look down upon me with gracious satisfaction, and amid the numerous necessities and errors to which I am exposed, mark the integrity of my heart, and out of thy mercy reward it.

MARCH 28.

The earthly Happiness of the Pious infinitely superior to that of the Votaries of the World.

Whether I consider the degree or the duration of the happiness of a Christian, I find it in all respects inestimable: but when I compare it with the happiness of those who love the world better than God, its value appears to me yet more enhanced. While they who are forgetful of God, attain, after long and difficult efforts, to a momentary felicity, which is again immediately exchanged for dissatisfaction, disgust, and remorse, the Christian, undisturbed and uninterrupted, can possess his good fortune without fearing any of these vicissitudes. While the former mark the daily diminution of their supposed happiness with affright, and have no consolation, when the lust of the world passes away every day, every moment presents to the Christian new treasures of enjoyment. When the most prosperous of those who have dedicated their hearts to the world, find in futurity cause to be troubled and concerned, the Christian, as he looks forward to the time to come, beholds multiplied delights, which their perpetuity augments beyond measure. In a word, the Christian alone is of all men the most satisfied and the happiest.

God has so disposed everything as to enable even me to arrive at this dignity, and at this happiness. To instruct me in this blessedness, Jesus entered into the world; to obtain it for me he became the lowest among the sons of men; and finally to elevate me to this state of superiority all his precepts and all his efforts tend. And how should I longer

regard this happiness without emotion? How could I be so foolish as to select instead of it the vain imaginary felicity of the earth? I perceive daily how nugatory are all mundane joys and gratifications. The world is faithless; its love is unstable; its pleasures are mingled with pain; its treasures are perishable; its dignities are degrading; and its hopes are uncertain! These are conclusions which every day teaches me. And shall I then act so inconsiderately as to abandon my happiness to such a vain and delusive dependence. No, I will behave more wisely in regard to my real welfare, and employ the experience which I have obtained of the inconstancy and futility of all terrestrial good in striving after those celestial advantages which are prepared for me above. There I shall find the most ample indemnification for all that here, out of love to God, or for the sake of my conscience, I renounce and lose.

Bend hither, O my soul, all thy hopes and wishes. Ever assuredly convince thyself that thou art destined to a more important heritage than any this world can bestow upon thee, and labour with zeal to obtain it. Its acquirement will diffuse real tranquillity and joy over all thy days, and greatly comfort thee under the exigencies of the present life. Thou wilt then learn to moderate thy desires, and to be contented with whatever the provident governance of God may impart to thee. Under all the perplexing accidents of thy existence, thou wilt never let thy courage sink, but cheer thyself with the anticipation of the happiness of heaven. Strengthened by the sure prospect of this heavenly portion, thou wilt moreover calmly contemplate the end of thy mortal course, and feel that, both living and dying, there is no man so happy as the Christian.

MARCH 29.

God's Holiness and Righteousness.

A NEW morning again calls me to occupations which have my eternal weal for their aim. A being created for eternity ought, during his whole course on earth, to have his eternal

destiny before his eyes. O God, thou who art thyself infinite intelligence, incline my heart, which desires wholly to devote itself to thee, to this perfect wisdom. Thou alone canst give knowledge and understanding; and to fear thee, is the summit of knowledge.

Just God! how great a dread of thee agitates my soul, when I consider thy holiness and righteousness! Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant; for before thee no man is justified! If only as a bondman, as a deeply indebted bondman, I were constrained to fear thee, this fear, when I recollected the end of my days, would not lead me to wisdom but plunge me into despair. Yet, praised be thou, O God, thou requirest not from me such slavish fear. I am to fear thee, and in Jesus I dare do so with a filial fear. This is my Saviour, who has made satisfaction to thy equity, who has suffered the righteous for the unrighteous, he it is who has become to me instead of wisdom: he renders me thy child, and teaches me also, by his example, so worthy of imitation, to fear thee like a child, and to walk in the way of eternity, which he himself has made plain for me. O Jesus, my guide, my wisdom, thou art mine, thou teachest me faith and godliness as the means prosperously to obtain my goal; and thy Spirit disposes me to use those means. Through the efficacy of this divine Spirit I am enabled to fear God as a child, and this fear makes me wise to salvation.

I belong by nature to the short-sighted, who can of themselves so little avoid evil, that they are even ignorant of the true good. Even thou, my Jesus, must open my understanding, if I am ever to escape error and sin. Withdraw not this day thy Holy Spirit from me. Through its influence instruct me to entertain those sentiments which are right and commendable, and to venerate thy presence with sacred awe in all my doings. Amid all the avocations of the passing day, my soul must be mindful of the grand aim at which it ought to aspire, and of its celestial calling, in order that no earthly care, no business of life, obscure it from my sight. Illuminate my mind, correct my will, that all I do I may perform with the view to please the Lord; and that I may preserve myself from everything, through which I might have reason to apprehend the loss of his parental love. Thus shall I possess that wisdom which consists in the fear of the Al-

mighty; thus shall I have the understanding to flee from wickedness; thus shall I be able in the approaching evening to look back with contentment at my day's work, and to supplicate thee for thy further favours without the bitterness of remorse: then shall I have gained another day for eternity.

And how much more precious is this gain than aught that the world can bestow upon me! How much more blessed is thy grace, O Lord God, than all the approbation of men!

MARCH 30.

Contemplation of Death.

I ALSO shall one day be compelled to obey the common law of humanity. I also shall earlier or later experience that I am no better than my forefathers. Of me also, if I am not snatched suddenly away, it shall be said, "He was sick, and his disease appertained unto death." I also shall one day behold those who are most dear to me surrounding my couch with weeping eyes; and well will it then be for me, if religion strengthen me under the regrets of separation A space some few hands broad will soon with me limit all those purposes and designs which render the days of man so full of toilsome sweat, and his nights so broken with disquietude. A few spadefuls of earth will cover me, my whole height and greatness. A few perhaps grateful tears will be all that I shall carry with me; all else must I abandon: for me the world has disappeared; it takes all back that I received from it, and yields up my name to oblivion. And if thou knowest this, my soul, why shouldst thou sacrifice thy most precious years to a world so vain and fleeting? Break loose from its dangerous snares, despise its guileful friendship: soar aloft and rest as often as thou canst with thy thoughts lingering on the boundary of that eternity which awaits thee. Seest thou then the world in its true form? if so, measure time and eternity together, and make thy election. And how can the choice be difficult to thee, since the preponderance of heaven over the earth is so infinitely immense? I will act like a reasonable being, and prefer the better part. I will contemplate this world as it really is, and often and in

vivid colours represent to myself the felicity which yonder world offers to the pious and the faithful, that my soul may be filled with heavenly sentiments, and never forget how speedily all sublunary pleasure vanishes, and that God's love alone endureth for ever. If I maintain this consideration in my soul, the universal decree of death will not be so very frightful. I shall rejoice that I too belong to the number of the happy who are freed from the bonds of the body, and set at everlasting liberty. I shall bless every day that brings me nearer to the hour of my final consummation. I shall call out with most longing desire, "When shall I go hence, to behold the face of the Lord, and be united to my Redeemer?" This frame of mind is most needful for a being who, like me, approaches constantly nearer to the termination of his earthly existence. It must at least assuage that bitterness which is wont to be indissoluble from the contemplation of mortality. And thou, thyself, O God, excitest me to renovate these meditations in my heart; for thou hast on all sides encompassed me with the images of death and evanescence, and each grave of a departed brother exclaims to me, "Bethink thyself that thou must die!" Every elapsed day proclaims to me the briefness and the rapidity of life. May therefore the idea of death everywhere accompany me, and inspire me with wisdom to live for heaven! may it forsake me not in the bustle of my affairs, and may it employ me in my solitude! Thus shall I become better acquainted with eternity, and regard my last great change without apprehension. Thus shall I further make it the theme of my daily praise, that I am to die, or rather, to speak more suitably, to leave an imperfect world, in order to pass into a perfect one.

MARCH 31.

The perpetual and swift Vicissitude to which every mundane Object is inevitably subject.

Eternal God! thou alone art subject to no variation: thou art from everlasting to everlasting, the all-wise and all-good, the holy and the just: as thy wisdom so likewise is thy will

unalterable. Thee, immutable Deity, do I approach this morning, to worship thee, and in deep humility to contemplate the changeableness and the frailty of my own condition. All, all that the world possesses is as transient as the month which, with this day, will have fled for ever. All things hasten to their appointed limit; all the beauties which charm me so greatly are fragile, and incessantly advance nearer to decay. Entire generations cease, new ones rise in their place; and these also will in turn, like those that precede them, become invisible on the earth. O! how small is the number of the days which God has allotted to mortals. Even though they extend their age to the utmost span, still their perishable part sinks finally into the dust, from which it was at first taken. All the goods of fortune, however great they may be, cannot render us happy. Love itself, the most agreeable of our feelings, suffers under the general revolution. In short, everything is utterly vain; and, as regards terrestrial objects, each of us, taught by his own proper experience, must exclaim, "I have seen the end of all."

Yet, is it actually necessary for me to traverse the whole globe, and to take a retrospect of centuries in order to be convinced of this truth? I need only think of the month which this day finishes. Where are the days, the hours, the minutes, which during this period I have lived? Where are the joys that gratified me, the hopes with which I have flattered myself, the plans which I purposed to execute? Where are the melancholy moments which I saddened with my sighs? They are all vanished, and have only borne me with them nearer to eternity. And thither will this day and all the pleasures which I this day promise myself, follow on rapid wing.

I should be inevitably destitute of consolation, if to this earthly instability I could oppose nothing durable, and so satisfy the instinctive longing of my soul after immortality. But how happy am I that I believe in an immutable, eternal God! that I profess a doctrine which gives me assurance that I shall live for ever! Thanks be to thee, O Lord, that thou hast granted to me this comfort. Amid all the decline and fickleness of things, and even under the most grievous vicissitudes, this trust shall support me. The prospect of a world which affords endless possessions and endless enjoyments, shall cheer my heart when oppressed and wounded by

the loss of temporal friends and fortune. Faith in thee, the everlastingly good and wise, shall inspire me with fortitude, when this worldly life, with its delusions and its afflictions, would otherwise overwhelm me with despondency and sorrow.

APRIL 1.

Supplication for the Continuance of God's Longsuffering and Pity.

One month passes away after another; but thy goodness, eternal, benevolent God, endures for ever, and day by day renews itself. How do I deserve that thou shouldst be thus kind to me? Wert thou of man's disposition, long since wouldst thou have withdrawn from me thy favour, and repaid my ingratitude with chastisement and vengeance. O how incomprehensible to me is this thy patience, thy forbearance, and thy grace, when, on the strict search of my heart, I am forced to accuse myself of so many transgressions of thy sacred mandates, and mentally confess that I have so often rendered myself, through indolence and levity, unworthy of the blessings of life; so often consumed in sinful or foolish endeavours the time which thou hast granted to me for my everlasting salvation! Ah! I reflect with terror on the bygone night. What if it had borne me into eternity? Where, miserable creature that I am, should I now be?—Praised be thy compassion, gracious, merciful God, which still permits me to live, and to behold the first morning of this returning month. O! that I might yet for the future become more deserving of thy goodness! But how inefficient will this wish be, if its accomplishment rests with myself! Thou, thou, my God, even thou must render me worthy of thy own pity. From thy support, and from my Saviour's love, I expect the strength so to live, that I may not insult thy grace, and cut myself off perpetually from thy compassion. O! take not away from me this thy help, for which I now humbly entreat thee.

I am still on the earth, where every day has its trouble.

And who knows what trial may be this day destined to me? If thou, O God of my existence, shouldst deprive me of thy stay, then would the slightest calamity weigh me down to the ground, and overwhelm me in despair. Hear me when I call upon thee in the hour of temptation, and forsake me not, thou God of my salvation, when I seek thy aid. But especially manifest to me thy kindness, if also this day, in the feebleness of my heart, I should stumble and fall. Let me not perish in my sins, neither chastise me in thine anger. Still patiently and indulgently bear with me, and let the barren tree stand yet another day. Yes, I have the firmest confidence that for my Redeemer's sake thou wilt in thy goodness continue to be gracious to me, and spare me.

And should I thus experience anew thy sympathizing love, O! how could I then persevere in rewarding it with opposition and unthankfulness? No; guided and excited to repentance, I will employ thy goodness to the salvation of my soul. This blessed influence I also implore from thee for all my fellow-Christians, who, like me, may have need of thy mercy and forbearance. Attract the sinner to thee through thy love. Keep thy children in faith and affection. Refresh the afflicted under their misery. Have mercy on the whole world, and let thy name always become more glorified in it.

APRIL 2.

Petition in behalf of our afflicted Brethren.

How much happier am I than many of my fellow-mortals on whom this morning dawns! Alas! what a number of these will behold the rising of the sun with aching hearts, and already in anticipation groan over the sorrows which the day's advance shall cause them! O! while at this moment many thousands in indigence and sickness lift up their hands to heaven, and sigh for alleviation and deliverance, I, on the contrary, can stretch forth mine to thee, my God, with a joyful mind. Ere I think of myself, I will remember these the unfortunate. O God! have mercy upon them! Thou seest the necessity under which they languish; thou hearest the

piteous lamentations which they utter; thou possessest the means to aid them. Have mercy upon them! No man, perhaps, can afford them relief; do thou assuage their pains. Perhaps they have yet long to mourn for assistance: do thou shorten for them the duration of their anguish. Teach them, for their consolation, to consider how much thy Son has endured and struggled for them, and let them, in his sufferings, find incitement, rest, and fortitude. Yet, shouldst thou have resolved still to defer the hour of help, should this day be doomed to be, by them, as sadly finished as it is now commenced, then grant them patience and composure, and that nobly courageous feeling which Jesus evinced even in his most agonizing pangs, that they, like their hallowed pattern, may say: "Not my will, but thine be done."

O! how happy ought I to deem myself, that I have arrived at this morning in health and peace! Am I superior in desert, or more pleasing to thee, than the multitudes to whom thou castest the lot of tribulation! No, O Lord; I deserved as little as they, that thou shouldst show me this preference. It is only thy grace, thy incalculable mercy, which sustains me, and preserves my life. I praise thee, thou Author of my existence; and not only my lips, but moreover my sound body, my tranquil bosom, and my whole being shall magnify thee. I will use these blessings to thy honour, and not destroy them by iniquitous irregularities. I will devote my faculties to thy duties; I will make my health subservient to the practice of goodness; and strive to defend my contented heart from the ingress of sin. I still live, I still possess my natural powers, I am still in the world: I will therefore avail myself of every opportunity to conduce to thy glory and to my neighbour's welfare. But how long shall I be able thus to speak? How soon may the instant be here, when my life shall touch its furthest limit; when disease shall rob me of strength and spirit for activity; when I shall lay racked on the couch of pain; and be already at the confines of the other world? Immediately, perhaps this day, such may be my fate. So long, however, as I have yet time, I will do good, and tire not. For in due season I shall reap without ceasing.—Render me, therefore, O God, industrious in the pursuit of virtue. Let me, in the station in which thou hast fixed me, perform the offices

which are incumbent on me with fidelity and assiduity, while there is still light, that the darkness of death may not surprise me in thoughtless sloth, and that I may spend the remainder of my life according to thy will, and for thy exaltation.

APRIL 3.

Resignation to God's Dispensation.

To be contented with that which we possess; to bear the privation of that which we have not, without murmuring and with cheerfulness; and to reflect that there is no situation which has not its peculiar advantage and its peculiar inconvenience, constitutes a difficult lesson for the proud and dissatisfied heart. For nothing is more contrary to the natural bent of the mind, than to be satisfied with that of which we are in actual possession. The restless, covetous imagination ever hankers after perfections which it fancies it has not yet obtained.—Contentment is, however, absolutely essential to my peace. A contented heart can congratulate itself on its happiness, even under the most inauspicious circumstances. But discontentment renders the most ample endowments of fortune itself tormenting and joyless. Whence has hitherto the greater part of my vexation arisen? Only from this, that I was discontented with the wise governance of my God, and longed for things which to my shallow reason, appeared necessary for my welfare. How many hours have I imbittered through dissatisfaction with the portion which God has appointed to me, and by perplexing myself with anxious study how to improve my worldly condition! And how wretched might I now be, if God had always listened to my desires! Had he satisfied my greediness for riches, I should be at this moment, perhaps, still less sensible of his goodness than I am, still less inclined to Jesus, still less charitable to my neighbours, and still nearer to my perdition. Had God, as I wished, granted me an unvarying series of tranquil and agreeable days, how presumptuous, how vain, how forgetful of Providence, and how haughty

might I have become! Had God, as it was oft my ambition, exalted me to a loftier post of dignity, how might I now be puffed up with conceited arrogance, and how unmindful of my own nothingness, and the Almighty's infinite greatness! In fine, I should indeed deserve pity, if all my rash wishes had been carried into completion. But I praise thee, O my God, that my thoughts were not thy thoughts, nor my ways thy ways. I praise thee for that wise disposal of events, through which thou hast preserved me from misfortune, and confirmed my true happiness; I praise thee, that thou hast deprived me of so much merely seeming good, and benefited me through so many sufferings.

O! vanquish yet, through thy Spirit, these perverse inclinations of my heart, which are so often the source of my disquietude. Thou hast given me all that is requisite for my real felicity, both in time and in eternity. This bounty let me thankfully acknowledge, and employ according to thy gracious views. Not without design hast thou placed me exactly in this and no other connexion with society; thou didst so, because thou foresawest that in this, more easily than in any other, my salvation might be promoted. Let then my life's best gift be a tranquil and contented heart, that resigns itself wholly to thy will, and confesses all thy ordinances to be righteous and wise. Hadst thou left me to my own guidance, I should surely have chosen very different ways from those in which thou leadest me; nor should I then have been able to look forward with so much confidence to the issue of my course. Conduct me still, O God, in consonance with thy counsels, and vouchsafe to me a willing mind to follow thee without repining. Not after opulence, gratification, and honour, will I strive: be thou my wealth; be the confession of thy name my glory, and my occupation with thee my delight. The station in which thou hast placed me is the best for me; and, however low and contemptible it may appear, still it affords me the power to ennoble myself to the highest degree, through whatever I perform or suffer in it with fidelity and love in unison with thy statutes.

APRIL 4.

The Delightfulness of Devotion, and its salutary Influence.

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth! heaven and earth are full of thy glory: glory be to thee, O Lord most high!" —With sacred feeling does the thought inspire me, that hereafter, when I have passed through the vale of the shadow of death, into the light of the celestial regions, transported with ecstatic rapture, I shall join chorus in this thanksgiving song of the celestial hosts that surround the throne of the Ruler of the universe. But already, even here, is it granted to me to worship thee and to praise thee, thou redeeming and unsearchable Power: and, though with a heart that is neither pure, nor pious, nor pleasing to thee, to publish thy name. O! how painful, so often as I would pray to thee, do I feel the conviction that I am not worthy of the high preference which thou hast shown to me in forming me after thy own image.—But how much also do I feel strengthened both in the will and for the performance of what is good, when with reverence and earnestness I solemnly address thee, and vow to thee to become more obedient to thy divine commandments and more commendable in thy sight. Then do I meditate on thy holiness and righteousness, and stand with awe before thee, who searchest and provest the heart, and unfoldest the inmost counsels of the breast. Then do I call to memory thy great mercies, and thy infinite goodness, which again this morning spreads itself in newness over me, and am moved with ardent love and gratitude to thee, my benignant Father in heaven. But this is love to thee, that I keep thy commandments; how then can I designedly transgress against them! Yes, to know thee, thou adorable, and to be thy adopted, that is happiness; and gladly to do what pleases thee, that is bliss and delight. To look up to thee full of infantine security, and to experience comfort in thy grace, that felicity is superior to all the treasures and all the joys of the world. O! strengthen my confidence in thee, and let not the consolation of this trust fail me when thou triest me through troubles and afflictions.

Let it be my most zealous endeavour to search out the wonders of thy wisdom, and the plenitude of thy beneficence in the destinies of my life; and let it constitute my sweetest recreation to proclaim thy praise, and to serve thee in faithful undeviating submission.

APRIL 5.

Consciousness of God's Favour the strongest Consolation.

How culpable and despicable should I be, were I to reverence the Lord only with my lips; were my heart to be far from him, while I offer up to him the homage of prayer! I thank thee, O my God, for the blessing of the pious affection which I entertain towards thee, so often as I elevate my heart to thee in worship. I acknowledge and feel how happy thou hast rendered me, through faith in my Redeemer, and joyful confidence in thy fatherly truth. How wretched, how lamentable a creature should I be, if I only knew, without loving, thee and him whom thou has sent; if doubt and infidelity beset my mind; if I bore not in my heart that veneration for thee which has so often already in the hours of temptation supported and rescued me! Where should I find rest for my soul, if I did not feel, see, and verily taste thy benevolence? These devout sentiments are my bosom's dearest comfort, and my strength, and my support under every trial. In these sacred emotions of love, of gratitude, and of confidence, I recognise that I belong to thee, my Father, and that thou wilt bless me. To these feelings I owe the tranquillity of my heart, and the peace of my conscience, and my most rapturous and cheering expectations. O! therefore will I often, through prayer and hymns of praise, fortify myself in such beneficial impressions, and invigorate them through the consideration of the inestimable favours with which God has been variously pleased to load me, and guard them as the jewels of my soul, and as the testimonies and sureties of my salvation. For wouldst thou have inspired me with such ideas, O Lord, didst thou not desire that they should draw me towards thee,

keep me steadfast to thee, and make me fit for, and worthy of, thy heaven?—Yes; to me they shall be a foretaste of that blessedness which, with thee, I shall hereafter perpetually enjoy.

APRIL 6.

Life to be measured not by Number of Years, but by Virtue and good Actions.

If I compute my life according to the measure of the time which I have lived, it is now indeed very long—but, if I judge it according to the good and laudable actions which it contains, it is exceedingly short. For the exercise of all the virtues which I am conscious of having practised, scarcely so many days would have been requisite as I have spent years. How much more good might I have performed, had I sensibly and readily employed all the opportunities which God granted to me for that purpose! Many an occasion has been presented to me of glorifying the Lord: have I well applied all these opportunities to that great end? Many an object of commiseration has the Divine Providence placed before me: have I on my part, so far as it has been in my power, acted as the charitable helper and deliverer, the friend and comforter of the unfortunate who sought my aid? How often have I subdued the rebel in my heart? How often have I repressed my desire of vengeance? How often have I thought of God in the hurry of the world, and worshipped him in privacy? How often?—Alas! with what shame and humiliation for me are these questions fraught!—Ah! God, I must confess, that in proportion to the sum of the days of my life, scanty are the good actions that I have accomplished. I have, it is true, lived a vast number of days, but can I also maintain that I have really and thoroughly lived them?

What avails to me a lengthened life in which I hardly raise myself above the irrational brutes? A life void of wisdom and virtue is no life; an age spent in sin will not qualify me for the blessing of God! O! that I might never forget this, and daily and earnestly reflect upon it! From

this day shall the better disposal of my existence date its commencement. Yet how?—Do I not, even now, delay perhaps something more urgent, while I only think and wish? O God of my destiny, come thyself to the aid of my desires. Remember not my former days, which I have partly slumbered and partly squandered away. So rule me that I may ever keep in mind the exceeding value, the fleetness, and the irrevocableness of time. So long as I live thou wilt continue to gift me with opportunities of doing good: let me use them uprightly, and acknowledge them as benefits. Yes; numerous occasions of doing good will undoubtedly arise in my future life. But, perhaps I may not then have the power nor the means, nor the support, nor the inclination which I now have, if I profit by the immediate opportunity which occurs to me. Would, however, that neither this nor any succeeding day of my life might be destitute of commendable endeavours! I entreat thee not, Lord, for a prolonged term of years, but for the grace properly to employ those which are appointed to me, however few they may be; and by the manifold amount of my virtues, to compensate the short reckoning of my life. He that loves God and man, and exercises himself in faith, lives long—lives well.

APRIL 7.

The Day of Judgment.

Now that again in this world I behold a new day, I call to mind that great day, O Jesus, which I shall witness at thy appearance for the last judgment; the most memorable day in the circle of all days and times! How momentous will be the occurrences of that decisive day, on which thy sentence will fix my fate for the whole course of eternity! Ah! ever must the prospect of this day be present to my memory, that I may not be ranked in the number of those miserable sinners who on account of their vices are compelled to regard this dread epoch as the most frightful in the revolutions of futurity! They have thee for their Judge, thou Omniscient, thou, who wouldst willingly love them and bless them, and to this

end offeredst up for them thy life;—thee, whose blood they hold not sacred, and whose blessing they will not accept. O! with what despair will they learn, that thou, whom in their life they despised, scornest and spurnest them on that awful day when help for sinners shall no more be found!

Almighty Judge! I also tremble as a breaker of thy law, when I think of that day: and nought can comfort me save thy proclamation: "Whosoever heareth my word, and believeth in him whom I have sent, cometh not into judgment." Heavy with the load of sin, beneath the weight of which I groan, I flee, during this season of grace, on each day of preparation for eternity, to thee, who art now still the Saviour of the guilty. I cling with steadfast faith to thy cross, which has expiated the iniquities of the entire world. For thy blood's sake, God, who has constituted thee Judge both over the quick and the dead, absolves and pardons me. I see in him no more the angry avenger of offended justice, but the general Father who will divide with me, on the day of arbitration, the heritage of his children.

Invigorated by this believing hope, I can await the day of thy coming with tranquil courage. But further me with thy grace, I implore thee, that I may not forfeit this assurance by voluntary sins, but strive to maintain it through faith and a godly life. Let thy solemn judgment-day ever be before my eyes; and let my heart, in constant expectation of its approach, zealously work its own sanctification. The retributive day may come and surprise me, ere I am aware. And though this day were even yet long ages distant, still my hour of doom, the moment of my death, is near at hand. Be watchful and take heed, O my soul, if it now be nigh to thee, all thy efforts to arrest its advance, or to escape from it, are in vain.

It is appointed to man to die, and afterwards follows judgment. Perhaps, even now, thy Judge is about to let his fiat fall upon thee. Watch and pray. Behold the Lord cometh! Hasten to meet him, that on his arrival, disgrace cover thee not.

APRIL 8.

The Heart proved.

Of what description are the ways which I follow? Have I found in them ease of heart and contentment? Does my conscience testify to me that I have walked before God, and that I have been faithful to my duties? Do I enjoy the love and the approbation of the more virtuous portion of my brethren? Can I reflect without repentance on what I have done, willed, and thought? How important are these questions; how profitable, and how necessary is it, that I should often put them to myself, and to myself likewise ingenuously answer them! Would it be well for me, that I should harden myself against the impulses of my conscience, that with levity of mind I should turn a deaf ear to its accusations? Soon should I then have cause to sigh over and despair of myself! Since he who, like a dreamer, proceeds in the path of sin, without inquiring whither this road will lead him, cannot escape destruction: for him there is no rescue. No longer therefore will I shun the examination of my heart and life, no longer conceal from myself, that I have permitted myself to be deluded by my own flagitious propensities, carried away by the evil genius of the times, and seduced by the weakness of my heart into folly and to the violation of my duties. O! how often has that falsely glittering prosperity, which the world promises to those who with inflexible obduracy stifle the still monitor within them, and prosecute with inconsiderate pertinacity the career of interest, cheated and allured me! How miserable should I already now be, if thy warnings, my Saviour, had not brought me to reflection,—thy love had not delivered me! Yes; to thee I owe it, that I am not yet lost—that pious designs and holy resolutions awaken to-day in my breast! O! be thou henceforth my guide. Confirm me in the execution of the purpose which I now form in the presence of God, that I will keep thy image before my eyes, and graven on my heart; and will tread in the prints of thy feet. How can I dare to delay my reformation when I know not whether I be not already at the furthest verge of my mortal wanderings? But even though

I were certain that I should yet live long, ought I to trifle with one hour of that precious time which is lent to me for my eternal salvation? Ah! no; henceforward my walk shall be in heaven: with patience and endurance in good works will I aspire after the life immortal.

APRIL 9.

The Christian, acknowledging God the Ruler of his Destiny, looks forward to the World to come.

A HIGHER than mortal hand guides my destiny: it is regulated by the Deity, of whose goodness, omnipotence, and wisdom, I find as many proofs as I behold objects! What could I desire for my happiness, which that God is not able to give me, whose word has called forth so many thousand worlds out of nothing! Into what difficulty could I possibly fall from which the divine skill which has prepared the heavens and formed all creatures so excellently, could not procure for me a safe issue? Or, what is there that should prevent me from recommending my ways to this God, fleeing to him as my refuge in need, and hoping in full confidence from him a hearing to my prayers?

It is true, I am a very insignificant being. I lose myself in the infinity of the works of the Almighty: and when I consider his exalted state, and the boundless compass of his dominion, I think indeed within myself: "Who am I, that God should regard me or take an interest in me?" But, on the other hand, I am comforted by the recollection that this majesty prevents him not from supplying the wants of the smallest worm.—Why then should he not prize me, since as a man I am so much superior to all other creatures? But here my impeaching conscience reminds me that I have often shown myself unworthy of this superiority, that I am deficient in so many respects, and that I have therefore no just claim on God's gracious providence. My conscience charges me to dread that the holy One and the righteous will punish me through the bereavement of his mercies, and through misfortune and sorrow.

And now, though I look around the whole world, I nowhere find anything that can release me from this anxious apprehension, or cheer my disquieted bosom with one sure trust. The doctrine of the gospel alone comforts me. Blessed be thou, O dear Redeemer, who through thy sufferings hast rendered the knowledge of my Maker, which would otherwise have conduced only to my terror and my torment, so full of joy and so rich in consolation! To thee am I indebted, that I dare to regard the great God whose glory the whole wide universe announces, as my loving Father; to place my entire confidence in him, and to anticipate from him all good, both temporal and eternal.—And O! how fair now, for the first time, appears the world to my view! How glorious are the prospects that open upon me! Is the earth full of the riches of the Most High, heaven will be still more so. There will God's love stream down upon me in blessings; there shall I perfectly comprehend the omnipotence, the wisdom, and the beneficence of the Lord. And how powerfully will the splendour of the Divine Majesty entrance me when I shall see it face to face, since even here at this vast distance it so strongly affects me. Then will my heart and my lips overflow with feelings of reverential awe, and with hymns of adoration and gratitude. And then also will thy praise, most beloved Redeemer, who, through thy atonement, hast rendered me so happy and so blessed, so honoured and exalted, become my eternal occupation.

APRIL 10.

Violation of Vows made to God.

How can I confess to thee, O God, how oft I have broken my covenant, my promises, and the vows which I had offered up to thee, without feeling shame and remorse? Far from me be such perverseness. It would indeed be a sad proof of the vileness and the flintiness of my heart, could I own my proneness to violate my engagements and my infidelity, and not experience at the same time that sorrow which repentance and ignominy infuse into the breast!

Ah! what great thanks do I not owe to thee, that thou hast not allowed me to sink into perdition so utterly destructive as to regard my situation unmoved, by sensations of penitent regret? Holy and true God, I cannot, I cannot lift up my eyes to thee without weeping over my falsehood, and acknowledging, with abashment, my instability. Thou hast been invariably true towards me, changeless in thy promises, and unwearied in thy blessings. But I, alas! how ungrateful, how light-minded have I been; times beyond number have I vowed to thee amendment, but I always remained as before. Often at the sacramental supper have I already renewed the bond of my reformation: there tears bedewed my cheeks at the recollection of my sins: there at the spectacle of thy love, my soul was filled with emotion and veneration; there I made solemn homage to thee of lasting affection and incorruptible servitude. But scarcely had I quitted the altar, which declared to me the glad tidings of thy tender esteem, scarcely had I pronounced my sacred asseveration, or finished my song of praise, when I forgot my obligations, and suppressed the devout operations of my spirit. To unfold to me the extent of my offences, it pleased thee to visit me with afflictions, to chastise me with sickness, and to bring me to the brink of the grave. There also I reiterated to thee that I would serve thee. But as soon as thou drewest back from me thy heavy hand, and restoredest to me my wonted energy, my professions were disregarded and still continue unfulfilled. How many mornings are past, in which I contracted new obligations with thee, and then as frequently annulled them.

Behold, O Lord, thus treacherous, thus fickle, thus corrupted is my heart! Thus little am I able to accomplish my best purposes, if thou thyself endue me not, through thy Spirit, with ability and inclination! I now stand before thee again to renew the covenant which thou establishedst with me at my baptism. God of unity in trinity, I vow to thee, and through thy grace will I keep true my holy oath, that I will make this day the commencement of my living to thy honour. Let the impression of this resolve continue so deep and efficacious with me, that I may under all circumstances recollect, without wavering, my plighted word. Let me sacrifice to this my declaration of duty every other.

engagement. Let nothing be so dear to me, nothing so durable in my memory, as the decision which now, at the rise of this day, I voluntarily embrace: I will be wholly thine; I will remain true to thee till death. As a Christian I will imitate my Saviour: both living and dying I will be devoted to him.—O God, thou hearest my determinations, grant me grace to execute them. Preserve me from the misery of a repetition of my perfidy towards thee, and from being compelled at the finish of this day, as in the past evening, to exclaim, O! wretch that I am, to-day again I have been a covenant-breaker! Rather vouchsafe to me the gentle consolation, that not only at the close of each succeeding day, but also in my last hour, I may be able truly to say, "I have held fast the faith!" Then may I likewise add with confidence, "Henceforward the crown of righteousness is laid up for me."

APRIL 11.

The wonderful Structure of the Human Frame.

My Creator! I thank thee that I am wonderfully formed. I cannot look upon myself without being amazed at thy wisdom, thy power, and thy goodness, which have magnified themselves as greatly in my body as in those immense heavenly bodies which roll above my head. Though there were no sun, no moon—though no stars illuminated the plains of ether, to proclaim to me thy existence and thy greatness, the mere spectacle of my own frame would tell me how mighty, how wise, how potent, thou art. Yes, I am a miracle of thy power, supreme, and all-adorable Maker of the universe! Nor should I deserve to bear about with me this body which thou hast so astonishingly fashioned, or to possess these senses, these faculties, this soul, if I kept not in remembrance thee, through whom I live, move, and have my being; and if I devoted not this production of exquisite skill to thy honour.

I contemplate myself, and I am struck with surprise at every glance which I direct to my own person. No mem-

ber is superfluous, each is found precisely in the place where both convenience and corporeal ornament require it to be. How worthy of admiration is the disposition of my internal parts! The organs of hearing, of sight, of smell, and of taste, how nicely are they contrived, and how artfully adapted to their respective functions! How flexibly does limb accord with limb! How fine is the texture of the nerves and veins! How pliant are the sinews, joints, and muscles, through which I effect the movements of my body! How judiciously are the organs connected, through which I take my nourishment, and how extraordinary is that inward arrangement by which the food is converted into blood and succulence, and my body refreshed! What symmetry, what variety, and what beauty, are displayed in every part of my construction! Lord, how marvellously hast thou made me! O! let me then, all-gracious God, never use this frame save to thy praise; whether I walk or sit, repose or move, speak or am silent, breathe or pant for life, weep, or in gladness smile! But grant to thy servant still to put his joy in thee, and let my body, undefiled and pure, become a temple, wherein thy Spirit deigns to dwell perpetually!

In this manner should I best employ the important gifts which the Almighty has entrusted to me. But how inexcusable, on the contrary, should I be, were I to dishonour this fane of the Deity, to disgrace this masterpiece of God's handy-work, and refuse to acknowledge the wonders it presents to my admiration! No: benignant Architect of nature, I will often and thankfully contemplate myself, and on each eview of my body, glorify thee. I will direct all my senses to attain the preception of thy greatness, to feel thy goodness, to observe thy miracles. I will not move without remembering thee, who hast given me life and motion. My conscientious and unwearied industry shall extol thy beneficence. And when, at length, this beauteous structure shall fall into decay, I will think with joy of the time when my tabernacle of flesh shall become like to the glorified body of Christ: when to all the benefits which I have already received from thee, this will be added, that I shall assume an immortal body. At these thoughts my whole heart is transported. O! how blessed shall I then be, when this earthly perishable fabric is taken from me! Lord

Jesus, to thee am I indebted for this blessedness Render me grateful to thee both in body and soul.

APRIL 12.

Praises of God the Creator.

ADORABLE God! all the hosts of heaven praise thee. And I also at the break of this day will praise thee. Praised be thou for all the mercies which in my past life thou hast vouchsafed to me. Praised be thou, that I am still able to prostrate myself before thee, and petition the renewal of thy goodness. Thou rejectest not my prayer; how often have I experienced this with the most joyful emotion of my soul! Thou art exalted above all, and too great that even the archangels should hymn thy celebration! How happy am I, through the knowledge of thy increasing beneficence, which manifests itself so gloriously even in the least of thy creatures, and which equally provides for the insect of the dust, as for the seraph that ministers at thy throne. Praise be ascribed to thee, that thou, who showest to the sun and stars their paths, leadest man likewise on his way; that thou art as gracious in the support of the meanest inhabitant of the earth as in the maintenance of the vast universe; that thou givest ear no less to the wailings of thy mortal suppliants than to the hosannas of the celestial choir.

O King of all kings! how dissimilar art thou to the servilely flattered potentates of the earth, who so often deny the petitions of their vassals, and are so often compelled, through inability, to disappoint them! Thou all-sufficient God, hearest and fulfillest the entreaties of countless millions of beings. When, for eternities, though didst establish the immense dominion of thy empire—of worlds, already full of wisdom and tenderness, thou didst resolve and predetermine the acceptance of all the prayers which at any time thy children should offer up to thee with pious hearts. Praised be thou, that I too can account myself of the happy number of these thy adorers. Even my request thou spurnest not. While I yet hung on my mother's breast, and ere I could, even in

lisping accents, express my wishes, already were the wants and welfare of the speechless infant thy paternal care. And still thou hast heed to my supplication when, in thy Son's name, I kneel at thy footstool. This morning, also, let thy goodness be over me; and turn not from me, thou God of my salvation. Without thy support I cannot live through this day, nay, not for this hour. Not in vain do I implore thee for this support: how often already have I been enlivened and comforted by thy fatherly love, when, in the awful consciousness of my own frailty, I addressed to thee the cry of aid, begged with tears thy blessing, and besought thee to guide me and protect me.

Show this grace to all my brethren. How many out of the depths of misery, how many sinners, how many wretches grievously attacked and oppressed, how many in poverty, how many in sickness, how many in the extremity of death will this day pray to thee! Help each according to thy truth. Have compassion on all who need thy pity. Be propitious to the devotion of thy children, whether they sigh to thee in private, or in the assemblies of the godly, that at the close of the day they may boast with joyful experience, "Praised be the Lord, who refuseth not my desire, nor averteth from me his benevolence." What numerous thankofferings will then be brought to thee! What tears of gladness will those who now weep for sorrow then shed! How will the righteous rejoice and publish thy salvation! Exulting will I then also unite with these triumphers, and give glory to thy name, which is become the refuge of all them that trust in it.

APRIL 13.

The World incapable of bestowing real or lasting Tranquillity.

O! THAT I could enjoy never-ceasing peace of mind! And why do I not enjoy it? I would covet nothing more on earth, if I could obtain this highest, most inestimable gift. But perhaps I desire too much. Perhaps this world is not intended—is not fitted to afford me perpetual tranquillity of

spirit. Yes, this is the side on which I must regard the world, if I would reconcile myself to it. Amid the corruption which reigns around me, amid all the allurements of the senses, amid the vices of mankind, under the dominion of sin and death, the longing after an uninterrupted state of mental calm must ever remain unsatisfied. And even the painful toil which I give myself to seek rest where no rest is to be found, renders the accomplishment of my wish still harder and more impracticable. Sometimes it is in the pleasures of sensuality that I search for my quietude; but these can yield me alleviation no longer than they last. Sometimes it is in the arms of friends that I seek to forget all my anxieties; but I only learn that they themselves have need of the same aid that I require from them. And in this manner I am daily instructed in the melancholy truth, that in this terrestrial abode no permanent ease can be expected.

O soul, that often sighest in solitude over this indubitable truth, be contented and dispel thy grief! This world, according to God's appointment, is not so ordered that it should bestow upon thee peace and comfort. Even thy Saviour, with all his godliness and innocence, was compelled to feel vexation and heaviness of heart! How often did the wretchedness of the world extort tears from him! How often was he forced to groan over human perversity! How little did he possess of the blessings and comforts of life, which gratify thy bosom at least for hours and minutes! He passed his days amid sufferings and distress; and in all verity might he complain, "There is no health in my bones!" Contemplate him, O soul, but not so much to convince thyself of the nature of the world as of this assurance, that Jesus, through his agonized existence, has obtained for thee happiness and relief. What no world can give thee that wilt thou find with Jesus. His doctrine, his sufferings, his death, even the yoke which he has laid upon thee, constitute the surest means of procuring tranquillity. Go but to him, weary and overburdened heart, he will refresh thee. Only submit thyself in faith to his bonds, and learn from him meekness and humility, and so shalt thou obtain quiet for thy bosom.

But always remember that thou art still in these lower climes, where sorrow and tribulation, care and dismay, belong to the number of life's inevitable evils. Look beyond

them with unerring eyes and gladsome hope to that immortality which shall endue thee with the peace that endureth for ever. Let this consideration of that futurity of bliss, which shall be the reward of the pious, soothe thee in the moments of affliction, when composure flies from thee. Keep to the Lord in stillness, and trust in him. He will certainly send thee healing to mitigate thy woe. Entertain these sentiments throughout the whole day. To-day, as heretofore, uneasiness will await thee. But do thou strengthen thyself through the consolations of thy faith, and the infallibility of thy expectations. Increase not, to thyself, thy anguish through doubt and disbelief, or through want of confidence and foolishness, but cast all thy concerns on the Lord, and rely on him. He will not leave thee always in trouble.

APRIL 14.

The Duty of constantly contemplating the Merits of the Redeemer.

Though I were not indebted to the love of Jesus for such endless blessings, yet the sufferings which he endured would demand my constant remembrance. We are accustomed to recollect with a peculiar force of feeling those heroes who in the service of their father-land have sustained, with undaunted courage, many various hardships, and presented to their country distinguished examples of steadfast patriotism, bravery, and fortitude. But who has done so much for the world, for his enemies, for me, as Jesus? Where was there ever a greater model of heroism, of philanthropy, of self-devotion, than he? And who ever obtained for all of us more eminent advantages? There is consequently no duty more incumbent upon me than this, that I should make him the incessant object of my thoughts, and thank him with unceasing fervour for his love. To excite me to this office of gratitude, I need only review the wide range of my Saviour's toils; I need only form to myself an impartial portraiture of his agonies and his glorification, and my heart must be penetrated with veneration and affection.

My soul, only remember Jesus, who is risen from the dead! How important, how profitable is this meditation? I see in the resurrection of Jesus the strongest testimonies of the veracity of my faith, and the most indubitable assurance of my eternal felicity. My hope can never more be disappointed, since on this account did Christ rise from the tomb, that I might have my expectation towards him. Now I have no cause to fear that I have borne his yoke in vain. I shall be like to him in his glory, as I have been like to him in his sufferings. How fully consoled may I feel in all the distress and gloom of my life, since the resurrection of Jesus promises me a happy escape out of all my troubles! How little cause have I to tremble at my sins, since the life of my Redeemer convinces me that they are forgiven! How cheered may I feel in death, since the returning of my Jesus from the dead is the seal of my own resurrection!

In all these benefits may I participate, if in faith I appropriate to myself the death and the merits of my Saviour. Jesus, my Lord and my God, quicken this belief within me! Let me never forget how much gratitude I owe to thy boundless beneficence. Never must thy memory be extinguished for an instant in my soul! Thy image must, through the powerful operation of thy Spirit, stand for ever manifest to my sight! The thought of thee must yield me comfort, when the immensity and the multitude of my sins overwhelm me! Exalted Jesus, thou hast established a complete atonement. Thou didst suffer so much, before thou didst enter into thy glory, and yet I may follow thee into that inexpressible state!—I must call thee to mind, whenever the pleasures, the gratifications, and the treasures which the world proffers to its admirers shall affect my heart. Thy resurrection assures to me far purer delights and far nobler possessions; and in thy love, O Jesus, I enjoy a foretaste of heaven. Yes, I so will think of thee in every felicitous hour of my existence, and if I walk in darksome paths, thy resurrection shall fill me with trust and hope: thou livest, and I shall also live.

APRIL 15.

Enumeration of past Mercies.

Thy eyes, O my God, beheld me, ere I was yet formed. All my days, which should yet be, and of which no one then was, were written in thy book. Even then didst thou already enter into the kindest views in regard to the whole tenor of my life. The benefits which I already received from thee in my earliest days, are in their value inestimable, and in their number countless. O Lord, how could I have advanced thus far in my course, had not thy solicitude watched over me, averted impending dangers, and satisfied my wants! Incapable of self-preservation did I enter into the world. Had not the All-bountiful supplied my sustenance; had he not covered me with his wings; had he not arrayed the angels for my guards, and encamped them round my cradle—where should I now be? And though I had still lived, how wretched, how infirm should I have been! During all these years, encompassed by so many perils, to which my infancy itself was exposed, I have been supported till this moment. My life has been nourished, my bodily powers have been daily renewed; my faculties and talents have unfolded themselves. O! what proofs do I discover of the superintendence of my God, when from my present years I look back to the preceding, and from these to my helpless childhood!

O Lord, I think with astonishment and thankfulness on my former days, in which I have exhibited in myself a living monument of thy providence. Thus long have I now inhabited the earth, and from the earliest moment thy goodness and thy truth have been with me. When in baptism I was consecrated to thy worship, and thus my soul received the primary and greatest token of thy benevolence; when full of innocence I sported on the bosom of my parent, cherished, nourished, and favoured by thee: when in devout simplicity I lisped thy praise; when, as yet, I knew no idea but love, felt nothing but love, practised nothing but love; when the angels still busied themselves fondly with me, and smiled upon my sleep: O! how happy was I then! Would that

I were still as submissive, as affectionate, as gentle, as artless! O! that I still resigned myself as freely, and as confidently, to thy gracious governance!

Lord, grant me a child-like, thankful, guileless heart. Let me, the older I grow, become always more humble, more abundant in faith, more grateful, and more fully devoted to thee. Should doubt and disquiet about my temporal prospects ever disturb me, let me reflect how propitiously thy control and thy foresight regulated my life, ere yet I was in a state to indulge care, or to disquiet myself. Thou, who at my entrance into the world, didst so kindly conduct me, wilt not, either during the progress, or at the end of my life, cease to take charge of me on my journey. Perhaps thou hast decreed to me a long period of existence; perhaps I shall again become as weak and as powerless as in the months that followed my birth: O! then, my Father, tend me, lead me, and rule me. Am I doomed sooner to quit this earth, let me die, I beseech thee, as mildly, as calmly, as blessedly, as I should have done, hadst thou recalled thy recent gift of animation in the most tender stage of my infancy.

APRIL 16.

Obligation to praise God.

OUGHT I not to praise my Creator, when I see how glorious, how gracious he is? Ought I not to magnify my God, when earth, heaven, and sea shout his applause? From thee, omnipotent Parent, I received the life which is this morning again renovated, and thy gifts are all the joys of my existence. Thou preservest for me, at this moment, my respiration, and the next instant hangs solely on thy will and goodness. And I, who am thus highly favoured by thee,—thy creature, thy image, thy redeemed, a wonder of the earth, a citizen of heaven,—shall I not raise my voice aloud, and laud thee? But, O thou highest Being, how can a mortal only extol thee, when the angels cannot utter thy perfections? but lose themselves in the contemplation of thy majesty, and worship thee in silent rapture?

How can I calculate the infinite measure of thy power, which out of nothing bade this grand fabric of the globe start forth in all its beauty? At thy nod the heavens spread themselves abroad; the sun sent forth its light; yonder stars were fixed on high. Thou lettest the waters expand, and appointest to them their flood-marks. Thy hand decketh the valleys with flowers, and adorneth the hills with groves. In all the productions of nature thou art great, magnificent, and adorable. Every rising sun announces to thy creatures thy goodness and thy wisdom. And the season of spring with its multiplied charms and decorations, forces even from the most unfeeling, the confession, "Many, O Lord, and astonishing are thy works; skilfully hast thou ordered them all, and the earth is full of thy bounty! O! how great, how noble, how perfect, must thou thyself be, since thy doings are so sublime and glorious!" When the consideration of thy wisdom is so rejoicing, how transporting must it be to contemplate thy omnipotence! From thee all living things receive their breath. Through thee all are maintained in life and motion. Thy providence embraces the whole creation. Thou feedest the worm as well as the lion, the raven as the eagle. Thy gracious benevolence blesses all creatures, and chiefly man, the most ungrateful among them. Thus noble and beneficent dost thou exhibit thyself as the universal Maker and Preserver. But O! how much more excellent dost thou yet appear as the God who, through the blood of his own Son, has reconciled himself with unthankful foes! Here still more convincingly thou discoverest how merciful, long-suffering, patient, and abundant in goodness thou art.

Shall I not praise my Creator? Shall I not thank my Supporter? Shall I not exalt my Redeemer? Yes, I ought, —I will praise thee, thou God of all compassion. Not only this morning, in which I again feel the exhilarating sensation of renewed health and vigour, not only this day will I glorify thy goodness; but yet in the grave, yet before thy throne, yet in eternity, will I proclaim thy renown, and more worthily than I am here able, more ardently and more wisely than here, adore thee—and in thy adoration be eternally blessed.

APRIL 17.

Resolutions of Holiness.

O LORD and Omnipresent God, to whom all creatures look up, I also in the morning of this day elevate my countenance and heart to thee. Praised be thou that thou didst not in the past night close my eyes for ever, but hast again opened them to gaze on fresh miracles of thy goodness. Would that the eyes of my soul might be as efficient and as active as those of my body! I will, however, at least, form this day the firm resolve to direct my whole mind to thee, and to keep thee always in view.

In every occupation of the day will I regard thee as the God who must give blessing and success to all that I do. I am incapable of myself to effect any thing profitable to my own welfare. Thou, O God, must grant both purpose and execution. Should I encounter alluring opportunities of sin, be thou ever present to me with thy holiness and righteousness, that a pious fear of thee may fall upon me, and restrain me from committing aught which thou disapprovest. Should the temporal calamities which are inseparable from this life also approach me, then let me, O Lord, set thee constantly in my sight, that those immediate and passing inconveniences may bear for me a peaceful harvest of piety, redound to my amendment, promote the safety of my soul, and bring me nearer to thee. This day will I have thee in memory, O my God, if it present to me any portion of good. No earthly gain shall tempt me to neglect the Lord, but rather nourish and increase in my soul the most lively emotions of thankfulness, and augment the ardency of my desire to become, through faithful obedience, ever more acceptable to thee, the supreme Excellence. But how much does my natural corruption weaken this desire! How often are the true enjoyments of my soul banished by sensual lusts. I am too weak to resist them if I combat against sin without thy aid, O Jesus. Therefore, I implore thee, withdraw not from me thy support. One day spent without thee may make me miserable for ever. Enlighten my eyes that I may always behold thee as the author and the perfecter of my faith.

During thy course in the world thou hadst thy looks always fixed on God, and his law registered in thy heart. I regard thee with confident reliance, and the most unequivocal wish to become like to thee. With this wish how should strength fail me to strive against my innate perversity, and shake the dominion of the carnal passions? Yes; I will to-day walk as a dutiful child before God, will preserve my soul spotless and irreproachable, and remain free from all iniquity. If, now, while I still live, I turn my face to thee in faith, so wilt thou hereafter look down upon me with grace, when in death I seek thy countenance.

APRIL 18.

The Happiness of belonging entirely to God.

The gladdening feeling of health and animation to which I have again awoke, and the Divine protection which I enjoyed during the past night, give a new invitation to my heart to consecrate itself to God, and to remain constantly devoted to him in gratitude and love. Willingly, my God and Father, will I obey the summons; for it is my sweetest duty to submit myself wholly to thee, and to thy benignant government; and my happiest portion to belong to thee. For what need I fear if thy approbation and thy blessing follow me; if thy almighty arm defends me: if thy wise counsel rules my destiny? Or what can be wanting to my spiritual welfare if thy eyes beam upon me with a parent's tenderness, and thou condescendest to grant me thy grace?

Yes; it is indeed, O my God, my felicity to be thy property. Do I deem myself fortunate if I have a true friend, in whose embrace I find contentment, comfort, and pleasure? Ah! how much more happy shall I be, if I have thee for my friend, and if I may boast of thy esteem! Dost thou claim me as thy own, and adopt me as thy child? then am I master of all that can render me felicitous or satisfied. I may then hold myself assured of thy guidance, of thy furtherance, of thy blessing, and of thy acceptance. And when death deprives me of all that I had hitherto possessed, when

it snatches from me my friends, or tears me from them, and nothing more remains to me than a little space of earth, then wilt thou continue my heart's consolation and my portion, and in thy love I shall obtain a complete indemnification for every loss.

Therefore it is right that my soul be for ever dedicated to thee, O Lord, my God! Behold then this morning I solemnly consecrate myself to thee. To thee be devoted my prayer, my thanks, my breath, my heart, and all that I call mine! I wish for no greater happiness either in this or in yonder world, than that thou mayest find me worthy of thy blessing and thy love. All else, that can be in any way advantageous for me, shall I obtain through this. I shall have no cause to be solicitous about the future, but rather behold in it the most agreeable prospects. I need be disquieted by no necessity, and troubled by no wants. Thou wilt order everything for the best, and already allow me an anticipated fruition of that blessedness which awaits me in heaven when I shall become thy property for ever. O God, let me, through the vision of this indescribable felicity, be excited to devote myself to thee, both soul and body. Dissipate the obstacles which prevent me from completing this offering, and let it continue to be perpetually my joy to hold steadfastly to thee, to put my refuge in thee, and to proclaim thy wondrous works.

APRIL 19.

God's Goodness endureth for ever.

I WAS once happier and more contented, freer from cares and more cheerful, than I now am. O years of innocence and peace, too speedily have ye flown! How calm, how satisfied, how bounded in my desires, how void of anxiety was I then! Now numerous troubles crowd into my heart; now sickness and pain blight my promises of joy; now my days are united with many toils. Now the more my age increases, the more do I experience fresh causes of distress, new accidents, and less animated hope—Soul, that thus reflectest in

secret, tranquillize thyself, and become not pusillanimous.—Time, while it rolls on, carries along with it incessantly some portion of thy troubles; and God, who has appointed the seasons and thy destiny, changes them according to his pleasure. He permits joy and sorrow to be blended in regular succession. Dost thou indeed desire, if it were possible, to recall thy days of childhood? Wishest thou again to brave the mischances which thou hast escaped? Yet let time pass away! The goodness of God endureth for ever: it daily renews itself towards thee. Daily does God afford thee repeated opportunities to practise virtue, and collect treasures for eternity. Daily does he preserve thee from numberless disasters. All is vain, all is transient. The goodness of God alone is subject to no vicissitudes, and the bond of his peace stands fast. Be not then, O my soul, broken down with solicitude; be not anxiously careful about the present day. The Lord will not forsake thee, nor in any way neglect thee. Be not thoughtful for the future. Say not: "How will it be, when hereafter I feel the heaviness of old age, the pains of a sick-bed, or any of the other infirmities to which human life is exposed?" He, that has led thee up from thy youth, will not abandon thee in thy hoary years. He, who in his goodness has meted to thee thy burdens, will not urge thee beyond thy strength. He, who through Jesus Christ has bestowed upon thee all else, will likewise not deny to thee the lesser gift. Has the morning of thy life been overcast? the noon-tide will perhaps be more serene, and the evening recompense thee for all thy woes. And should even everything in this life continue sad and miserable around thee, await with composure that morning which shall usher in the dawn of thy everlasting happiness.—Then will the suns of adversity and grief set to rise no more.

With such glorious encouragements, cease not, O soul, to rest thy hopes on thy God. Be comforted and undismayed, and cling to the Lord. As the benefits of the Almighty increase, so must thy trust, thy confidence, and thy love augment. Beware of ever ungratefully undervaluing his goodness, or abusing his patience and forbearance. Through how many deeds of kindness will not God even this day seek to draw thee to him? Be not thou reluctant, but let his grace have that effect upon thee for which it is

vouchsafed to thee. Offer up to the Lord thanks for each of his donations, and pay to him thy vows. Whosoever offers up thanks praises him; and this is the means through which thou mayest obtain that he still farther manifest to thee his salvation.

APRIL 20.

Gratitude to God for the Power of knowing and worshipping Him.

O THOU most excellent Being! Eternal, adorable God! thou fulness of all perfection, and of all that the myriad hosts of spirits behold and wonder at! I render to thee in this hour of dawn my most earnest thanks, that thou hast rendered my soul capable of a lively knowledge of thy glory. This knowledge exalts and ennobles the love which I bear to thee; it confirms my hope, and animates my devotion. It invests me with a real dignity; since it averts my thoughts from earthly objects to thy infinity, and bends every faculty of my mind to obedience towards thee. Thanks be to thy mercy which has again enabled me with a ready heart to pay thee adoration. I am wholly thine, my God, my sole Lord, and Sovereign. I am thy servant; with gladness do I own myself thy servant. This name does me more honour than all the titles of the world.

How shall I requite thee for all that thou hast done for me to this moment? I can give thee nothing except myself; nothing except my heart, which even thou thyself hast disposed to be to thee an acceptable sacrifice; that heart which overflows with affection towards thee, and desires nothing more ardently than to be united to thee in completeness of love in eternity. But how feeble are my expressions to denote thy bounty, or the warmth of my gratitude? Had I an angel's tongue to hymn thy praise, yet would thy blessings never be celebrated, even though I were to infuse all my powers into the strain, that I might attain the prize of piety. What thou hast done, O God, for thy worshipper exceeds the farthest stretch of cherubs' thought.

For whom have I in heaven besides thee? and on earth there is no one after whom my soul yearns save thee, O Lord. Thou art my God and my portion in eternity. In thee alone I am completely blessed. How can I be conscious of all this, and not feel that my understanding is far too limited, my inclinations far too weak, and my words far too impotent, rightly to applaud and admire thy resplendent grace?

I confide in thee and love thee. O! that I could yet more fully praise thee, and adore thee! Would that I could do so as the angels and the glorified spirits that stand around thy throne! O! when shall I go hence, and reach that promised land where I shall be able more closely to behold thy face and contemplate thy miracles, and more perfectly to revere thee. Thou, O God, art the commencement and the consummation of my faith. Be thy support influential in all my just purposes and undertakings. Withdraw my soul ever farther from terrestrial things, that it may ever better comprehend its heavenly destiny. Let me have the reward of immortality perpetually before my eyes, that with the most faithful obedience towards thee I may pursue and happily finish my course in the path of Christianity. Thy favour, O Jesus, has enabled me this morning to meditate upon thee with joy. Thy Spirit has imbued me with rapturous sensations of thy love. Let these feelings and these thoughts serve not merely for my comfort and delight, but let them conduce to my amendment. Grant, O God, that they depart not from me during this day, but make me strong against all the temptations of the world and sin. Let me always increase in thy favour, and let my heart continue blameless before thee in sanctity till the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

APRIL 21.

Trust to be put in God, not in Man.

How unfortunate have I often felt myself, merely because, in the weakness of my heart, I had placed my sole depend-

ence upon men, and from their sympathy and aid alone expected relief. Now when I can calmly and dispassionately consider my conduct, I evidently perceive how foolish it is to put trust in beings so weak and so impotent, and who have frequently not even the inclination to afford help. I will always regard good men as the instruments which the Almighty employs to be serviceable to me, and gratefully own that their commiserating interposition and assistance have on many occasions consoled me, extricated me from difficulties, and rejoiced me; but, at the same time, I will never forget that men can avail nothing, if God blesses not their efforts; and that human kindness and participation in my welfare can never still the cares and troubles of my heart, if I rely not with filial affiance on God, if I do not believe that his wise providence rules my destiny, and that neither happiness nor unhappiness can occur to me, if the Deity has not so determined it. O! I am now sensible, and confess how often and how deeply I have sinned against my loving Father above, through failing to confide in his affection and his knowledge; how often I have augmented my distresses by not remembering, that no hair falls from my head without the consent of my celestial Parent; how often has my hope been frustrated, because I referred it to my own prudence or to mortal support, and placed it not in him who does exceedingly beyond all that we can ask or understand. The bitter lesson which I have been taught shall make me wiser. I will strive, through pious meditation on the wonderful ordinances of God, always more firmly to strengthen myself in the belief of his guardian vigilance, and in the conviction that all is well which he appoints; but I will also never forget, that in conformity to his wisdom he cannot possibly grant me everything which my frail heart craves; though he really gives me all that is either salutary for me, or that can contribute to the tranquillity of my soul.

APRIL 22.

Daily Duties.

THE greater part of my fellow-mortals employ the present morning in reflecting upon the occupations in which they are about to be engaged, and in considering the means which they shall adopt to prosecute their fortunes or their pleasures. But I will think of the concerns to which my faith imperatively binds me, and follow the method which it prescribes, in order that I may pass the day in accordance with God's pleasure.

I will make it my business to praise the Lord, from whose mercy I daily receive more good that I can imagine. I will every day, and especially at the close of each, institute a retrospective examination of the blessings which I have received from God. From the gift of my immediate nourishment I will raise my admiration to the inestimable promise of eternal life, and glorify my heavenly Father in all things. It shall continue my daily exercise to strengthen myself in faith. I will no longer live without meditating on my religion, without every day devoting, at least, some minutes to the contemplation of Jesus, and him crucified. I will daily examine the Scriptures, and gather for myself instruction, encouragement, and consolation. This divine book shall lead me right when I go astray; it shall convince me when I am in doubt; it shall refresh me when I grow weary; it shall recreate me when I feel sad; and powerfully invigorate me when I languish under afflictions. Especially in doing good will I assimilate myself to Jesus, whose whole life was beneficence, consolation, and blessing. I will deem every day lost, in which I do not seize the opportunities afforded to me of virtuous utility. I will be the friend and benefactor of all my fellow-Christians. Should I be able to accomplish nothing further than to pray for them, it shall be my favourite task to recommend them with supplications to the protection of my God. In regard to what remains for me to do, I will be indefatigable in the discharge of the duties of the station in which the Lord has thought fit to place me; and as far as is in my power willingly undergo

everything to promote the wider diffusion of equity, happiness, and joy in the world.

Such is the scheme of conduct which it behoves a Christian to form at the beginning of each returning day, and that according to which his Judge will hereafter decide upon his fate. O Christian, be thou sure to keep this well in mind! Jesus will not in the hour of retribution inquire of thee about the plans which thou hast projected to secure for thyself riches, honour, and prosperity; but of this nature will be the questions put to thee: "Hast thou fulfilled the purposes for which I gave thee existence? hast thou laid out the talents which I entrusted to thee to my honour, and the world's best interest?"—And woe to thee, if thou canst appeal to no action by which thou hast carried into completion the views of the Author of thy being! And if thy Judge were now to come, were he at this moment to cite thee to his tribunal, what wouldest thou reply to him, if he should demand from thee an account of even one single day? Oughtest thou not to shudder at the bare idea? Ought it not strongly to instigate thee to dispose savingly of thy time, and to live for heaven? Sanctify this new day by rendering it the commencement of so indispensable an effort, and regard both this and each succeeding one as a step towards eternity.

APRIL 23.

Petition for the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not the favours which he has showered upon thee! Should I indeed have any of the feelings of humanity, if thy goodness did not touch my heart, if it did not tend to render me thankful and obedient? Now, O Lord and Father of my life, I confess with glad and grateful feelings how, for Jesus' sake, thy goodness is ever recent with me; how it has hitherto helped me, spared me, and protected me! The remembrance of this shall never depart from my mind. Ah! do thou, therefore, endow me with thy Spirit, which teaches me to make lively

acknowledgment, and a salutary use of thy mercy. And now that I approach thy throne to offer up to thee my prayers and petitions, let me ask so that my request be accepted, and let me worship thy name with veneration.

God, be gracious to me! I deserve not, on account of my sins, that thou shouldest show thy compassion to me anew. But with humility do I invoke thee, to have regard to the merits of my Saviour, through which I become worthy of thy approval. Withdraw not from me thy blessing, so often misused and squandered. Let my breath, but more particularly my soul, be preserved through thy divine protection. Grant that, being created and redeemed for a happy immortality, this my soul may continue incessantly mindful of its destination, and never forfeit, through sin, so noble an appointment. Implant in it thy fear and thy love, and tear it ever more and more asunder from those terrestrial bonds by which it is enchained. And since I was brought into the world according to thy inscrutable decrees, to the very end that I might labour for the salvation of this same deathless spirit, inspire me with zeal to fulfil my important purpose, so that I may not become, at any time, slow in striving to qualify myself for thy grace and for thy kingdom.

The relation with society, in which thou hast placed me, prescribes it to me as a duty to pray also for my fellow-mortals. Be propitious then, I beseech thee, to the people among whom I dwell; let this land grow rich in virtue and prosperity. Let the heavenly manna drop everywhere upon her hills. Let the nurture of her children be improved. Let the immorality which frustrates and retards thy blessings be entirely banished from their boundaries. On the other hand, let godliness and Christian ardour be augmented. Let thy goodness be ever more evident and more extended; let it be a comfort to them that mourn, to them that are in want, and to all the afflicted; let it furnish to the dying an hour in which their departure may be in peace. Grant, likewise, that especially those with whom I am connected by the ties of blood and friendship, may, most bountiful God, this day witness again thy mercy; and O! give them yet, thou Parent of all, further cause to boast of thy compassion.

Thou knowest, Lord, the necessities of thy children, and thou art always ready to bless them and make them joyful.

Who is he that would not trust in thee, seeing that thou alone art holy and wise?

APRIL 24.

The Sun.

Behold, the sun hath issued from his chamber, and spreadeth light and joy through all the realms of nature! What a prospect presents itself to the view! The sky is painted with the brightest azure, and bestrewed with roses. A variegated verdure clothes the plains. The whole creation appears adorned with inexpressible loveliness. The ravished eye casts its glances around on every side, and is never satisfied with gazing. At the nearer approach of the star of day, the mountains lift up their heads; the earth exhibits a thousand testimonies of gratitude and satisfaction; from every meadow, and out of every grove, the voice of pleasure warbles.

Without the sun's genial fire, what would the world be but a dismal dungeon? All its charms would be hidden and lost, were they not revealed by the lustre of this illuminating orb. An attentive mind discovers in the sun a vast fund of meditation. Its resplendency, its force, partake more of the Divinity than does any other visible object. It constitutes the best image of the Creator offered to the senses, and is well adapted to give us the most exalted idea of his omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness. But it forms also a type of that Sun of Righteousness, which arose for the salvation of mankind, and visited us while we yet sat in darkness, and under the shadow of death. As often, therefore, O my soul, as thou praisest God for the return of day, revere him likewise for the far more precious manifestation of the luminary of salvation and his glorious gospel!

If there was no sun, the trees would produce no fruits, the shrubs no flowers, the fields no grass, the vales no harvest. The fig-tree would not bud; there would be no shoots on the vine-branch; the tilled land would yield no food; the sheep would be snatched from the folds; and there would

be no cattle in the stalls, were the earth to be robbed of the sun's vivifying beams. The sun awakes the spring, it quickens the roots of the plants, it renders fluid the nourishing sap, it penetrates into the deepest recesses of the ground; and as widely as its rays are darted, it becomes the universal origin of animation, ornament, and beauty. If there were no Redeemer, how dead, how barren, how frightful would be the rational world? He alone can refresh it, and give it life and blessedness. He is the true light that enlightens all men that come into the world.

The sun has a peculiar power to exhilarate the mind, and gladden the heart. If in the morning it shines with unclouded radiance, all creatures are buoyant in spirits and rejoiced; if, on the contrary, it is overcast only for a few minutes, the reign of sadness becomes equally general: the birds are mute; the sounds of transport cease; dejection usurps even the human breast; terror and gloom everywhere occupy the scene. If Christ hides his countenance, ah! what black obscurity envelopes all that the soul beholds! All that is around me is then melancholy; all that is within me comfortless. Let, therefore, O benignant Saviour, the brightness of thy face for ever shine upon me. Show thyself in my heart, and impart to me that which nothing earthly can bestow—the light of the soul and the peace of the mind. Then the material sun may be extinguished, and the light of the earth darkened: all nature may mourn: the heavens may go down and disappear: thou wilt be my sun, my light, my joy, and my heaven. In thy splendour, thou immeasurable One, I shall see light and enjoy it for ever.

APRIL 25.

Christ's Benevolence and Love.

THE whole tenor of the conduct of Jesus was one continued living example of philanthropy and benevolence. And since it is also my destination in the world to practise these virtues, where can I select a nobler specimen for my imitation? How tenderly solicitous was he for the welfare

of the human race? He converted his power to their aid, not only when his assistance was entreated, but he sought out the distressed, and proffered them his succour. He journeyed with great toil to distant places, and visited the meanest abodes, that high and low might have the advantage and the comfort of his presence. He anticipated the desires of the unhappy, and went about to do good. To the blind he restored sight, and bestowed health on the sick. To the miserable maniac he gave that which is more precious than light and than all the senses of the body, the use of the faculties of the understanding. But what yet far surpasses all these benefits, he freed the soul from the dominion of darkness, and from the tyranny of sin. He made his followers participators of the heavenly nature, and prepared them for blessedness. He neglected his nourishment and rest to sacrifice himself to the interests of his fellowmen, and was sacrificed for them. Neither the irksomeness of incessant self-denial, nor the slander of venomous tongues, could restrain him from the prosecution of his labours. He aspired at no offices of dignity, no fame, no reward. The honour of his Father, and the happiness of mankind, these were the only objects of his godly ambition. To these all his efforts tended; these were the scope both of his sufferings and his death. Was there ever such goodness exhibited as this?

And how can I contemplate Jesus's life of beneficence, without wishing and striving with all my might that my own may be as full of humanity? He has left me a pattern to follow: I ought not merely to admire his love, I ought also to display it in myself. But how ashamed do I feel, when I consider this duty! The life of Jesus was an uninterrupted series of blessings and benefits bestowed on man. I can scarcely, in the whole amount of my years, signalize a few hours in which I have exercised the gentler offices of charity and affection. He sought out whereabouts he might find the miserable: I avoid them when they look for me. To him every hardship was agreeable, if only he could do good: and I, though possessed of every facility to do good, am hard and merciless. Ah! thou Divine Philanthropist, how unlike am I to thee!

APRIL 26

Resurrection to Bliss.

As this morning, endowed with new force, I awoke to a new existence, so shall I hereafter with still greater vigour awake to that life of blessedness, in which it will be my happy portion to reap what I have here sown in the fulfilment of my duties. But since this is my high destiny, how dare I, how can I direct my efforts only to the concerns of the world, as if this state were to be my lasting dwelling-place? No, never will I forget for a day that my faith holds out to me a glorious goal, which I ought to strive with my utmost endeavour to attain. I will labour with zeal and fidelity to purify my heart. I will do good with unwearied constancy. I will keep God's holy law before my eyes, and present to my mind in all my actions; for I know that it is not in vain that I walk blameless on the earth. No, it cannot be in vain, since God is good and wise.

He has implanted in my bosom this longing after everlasting duration; how can it be, that he will not satisfy it by an immortal existence? He has bestowed upon me germs of perfection that cannot be unfolded in this short and painful life; how should he then not have appointed and kept in store for me a life more exalted, in which my spirit may arrive at that point which on earth it could not reach—perfect intelligence and knowledge, and satisfactory evidence of all those things which here in the flesh it but dimly conceives. O! this belief of my eternal destiny is to me a delicious consolation, since my terrestrial lot is so pregnant with care and woe: it forms also a stronger and more beneficial excitement to the performance of good works, and to cheerful and assiduous fidelity in my calling. The world, therefore, may refuse me its thanks and its applause; it may overwhelm me with embarrassments and trouble: my hopes are fixed on heaven, on the abodes of interminable peace, which my Saviour has made ready for me.

APRIL 27.

The Condition of Man.

I AM a man produced by God out of nothing, and yet so highly dignified, through reason and free-will, above all his other creatures, and so richly blessed. How sacredly am I then bound in duty as a rational being to praise my Creator in wisdom and piety of heart!

I am a man, but a very corrupted sinful man; my innocence is obscured, my worth degenerated; a few traces only reveal the greatness with which I was originally invested. And yet I would be proud of my privileges! I would consider myself guiltless! I would not have patience with my brethren, to whom I am similar in their misery!

I am a man. In comparison with God I am merely dust and ashes. Betwixt my conceptions and his comprehension there is an infinite difference. Ought I then so to presume in myself as to judge his hidden ways, to criticise his ordinances, and to murmur at his decrees?

I am a man, connected by a common bond with all men. They have with me one author, one hope, one vocation, one fate. How then can I be uncharitable and cruel towards them?

I am a man; but through Jesus a being born to happiness. He has greatly ennobled my nature, inasmuch as that like me he became weak and needy. He has beyond all measure magnified the whole human race in this, that he has obtained for them through his death a blessed immortality. How should I not prize it then as my chief happiness to be a favourite of this God-in-man, and to be already here united with him through faith and piety.

I am a man, to whom God has given a heart capable of much feeling; how inexcusably should I then act, were I to stifle the instigations of pity, and refuse growth to that sensibility which he has implanted within me! How undeserving should I be of the name which I bear, were I not to combine human sentiments with my human form!

I am a man, and therefore even with the sincerest will, and the most ardent zeal, exposed to numerous errors, failings,

and frailties. How should I then dare to be proud of my virtue? How should I dare to despise my fellow-men, and justify myself before thee, the all holy God?

I am a man, and consequently, while I live here, subject to a thousand accidents which remind me of the wretchedness of my state. Far be it then from me to arrogate to myself superiority above others, and to contemn my brethren in feebleness and lowliness; but be this my endeavour to alleviate the distresses of all, to pray for all, and according to my means to contribute personally to their happiness.

I am a man, a perishable mortal creature. My days hasten away, and my life pampers itself for the grave. The remembrance of the fleeting condition of my worldly tenure ought therefore constantly to accompany me, to render me indifferent to the things of the earth, and prompt me to more industrious preparation for eternity. Death, while it carries me to a better and securer haven, will elevate my nature to its proper distinction; for there I shall be holy, immortal, and eternal.

APRIL 28.

Blessedness of the Time spent in Communion with God.

Lord, I will sing of thy might and boast of thy goodness in the morning; for thou art my refuge and my protection in every necessity. I celebrate thee, my Shepherd; for thou art my defender and my gracious God. With whom can my thoughts be more profitably occupied than with my Father, who is worthy of all love—who dwelleth in heaven? O! it is a precious thing to give thanks to the Most High, to laud his name with songs, and both at dawn and eve to proclaim his truth! I have outlived another night. Surely this is an important event for a mortal, who dares not to vaunt of to-morrow, since he knoweth not what to-day may bring forth. I still behold on this cheerful spring morning the goodness of God renewed towards me on every side. Thousands of my fellow-creatures sank during the past night into the profound lethargy of dissolution. How many only at the close of yes-

terday cried out with groans: "O! that I might behold the rise of day!"—yet saw it not. How many do indeed see the new, early light; but so languid are they, and so hopeless, that their sighs breathe forth the invocation: "O! that I might hold out till the twilight reappear!"—But I still live. I have no cause to greet the morn with tears, or with terror to await the evening. O! how much mercy does the Lord of my life show to me!

In the course of these reflections some minutes are already fled!—Fled? Yes, but not lost; they follow after me into eternity. But, alas! how have I spent the greater portion of my days? That, that is lost time which I cannot recollect with a good conscience. And how many morning hours which I have idled away without emotion, without gratitude, without any virtuous resolve, must I add with shame and remorse to the sum of this lost time! But wherefore is my heart still so cold, when it ought to glow with thankfulness to God? Wherefore speak I not late and early of the benefits of the All-bountiful? Because I do not properly comprehend them; because I know not how to estimate their value, and am insensible to their magnitude; and because I consider not how wretched I should be were I compelled for one single day to be deprived of them. This morning, however, will I prolong the contemplation of thy gifts, my adored Father, calculate the immensity of thy beneficence, and represent to myself how miserable I should be, were I constrained to endure the denial of thy favours, and enjoyed not thy support.

No, I will not be devoid of feeling in the midst of such abundant proofs of thy benignant providence. Let me understand and experience, let me see and feel how friendly thou art; and be wholly rapt into that blissful ecstasy which transports thy glorified elect at the spectacle of thy greatness and thy graciousness. Even now these happy spirits look down upon me and bless me, as in concert with them I worship thee, eternal God, whom they incessantly extol. O! how sacred is the hour in which I bend my thoughts to thee! May thus every hour of this day, may thus my entire life, be hallowed to thee!

APRIL 29.

Reliance on God, and Resignation to his Will.

WHEREFORE have I not more confidence in thee, my God? Wherefore am I so weak in belief, so full of mistrust? Can I look upon the earth, can I regard the heavens, can I even turn my eyes upon myself without being confounded with shame? Can I call thy might into question, and at the same time contemplate the general and particular evidences of thy omnipotence everywhere apparent to my view? Dawn recounts to dawn, and one day publishes to another how great are the wonders of thy mercies. The years and periods elapsed are witnesses of thy inexhaustible goodness, which is every morning reproduced. All things on earth may change, but thy goodness and thy grace endure for ever and ever! I adore thy power; I stand amazed at thy benevolence and faithfulness. I renounce all reliance on man and on my own capability. If thou bless me, so shall I be blessed; blessed without reservation; blessed in life and death; blessed in this and in the future world. Thy blessing will go before me as a leading star, and follow me as a guardian angel.

Be it therefore my most earnest endeavour to substantiate my claim to this blessing by undeviating integrity and fidelity in the profession which thou hast appointed to me, and through the constant improvement of my heart. Then need I not with careworn apprehension dread the events yet buried in the womb of time; mournfully prognosticate the moment when my faculties shall fail, or grieve beyond moderation when those who in attachment and esteem walked at my side are snatched from me by death; for since thou art always my trust, and my heart's portion, why should I be troubled? Dost thou mark me with approbation, what have I to fear? It is true, thou sparest not the pious in sorrows and afflictions; but even through these thou blessest them. Therefore will I not murmur if according to thy inscrutable counsels thou provest me with sufferings and woes, and listenest not to my inmost humblest petitions.

No, far be it from me to desire that thou shouldst satisfy all the fancies of my heart; for I know that thy wisdom and

thy bounty are unlimited, and that thou bestowest upon me whatever is profitable for me. Sooner can the annihilated earth be reduced to that void from which thy word called it forth, than thou fulfil not that which thou hast promised. Thy knowledge and thy beneficence have no term to their continuance; this certainty is and shall remain my bosom comfort; and therefore dare I be joyful in hope, even when sadness overshadows the present, and the prospect before me appears dreary and cheerless.

APRIL 30.

Self-examination at the Close of the Month

How momentous are the questions that on this day, in which I see the termination of another month, it especially behoves me to put to my heart! A strict examination of my conduct and disposition of mind during the brief portion of the year now nearly finished, must in its result be undoubtedly humiliating to me; yet I will not shun it, or conceal from myself aught that may tend to render me better. This self-scrutiny will make still more remarkable to me the goodness of God and teach me the necessity of calling upon him for his grace and indulgence.

Inexpressibly great, O God, have been the proofs granted to me of thy benevolence in the days that are now just elapsed. But has the display of thy kindness impressed me with a proportionably deep veneration? Was my heart affected and thankful when thou blessedst and cheeredst it? Innumerable were thy invitations to this feeling. Every pleasure which I enjoyed was a voice that exhorted me to gratitude. Every deliverance from impending evil confirmed and repeated the same incitement, and produced for me an opportunity of exercising the heavenly occupation of praise, to which I was thus favourably allured. Was it my delight to consider thy blessings, and my most agreeable duty to proclaim them? All things declared to me thy powerful love. But did thy tenderness so prevail with me that I in return loved thee with my whole heart and my whole soul? Was

it the primary object of my solicitude so to direct my life that its approval in thy all-seeing eyes might be insured? Did I to thy will, to thy honour, to thy service, present the complete oblation of all my inclinations, of my pride, and my worldly advantages?

And what was my behaviour towards those whom thou hast allotted to me for brethren? Was my heart warm with brotherly affection? Was I sincerely careful for their welfare and their happiness? Were all occasions dear to me on which I could relieve the poor, comfort the wretched, assist the unfortunate? Was I prompt in reconciliation, or prone to nourish malice and indulge revenge? Did I cherish my friends? Did I bless them that cursed me? Did I requite with good those who hated me? Did I pray for such as wronged and persecuted me? Was my heart submissive and moderate in prosperity, and in adversity full of fortitude and confidence? Can I say that I have really lived, that I have not dreamed nor squandered away the weeks that are gone? Can I look back to them with tranquil satisfaction, or have I not reason to fear that in regard to my righteousness I shall be found wanting, and fall into disgrace!

O! how could I hide anything from thee the searcher of hearts; from thee, the Omniscient, Holy, and Just? Alas! wert thou to enter into judgment with me even on account of this one month, of which I now approach to the close, how could I stand before thee who art the explorer of the secrets of the silent thought, who art the pure and upright Judge? My desert would be that thou shouldst this moment abridge my existence, and destroy a creature no longer worthy of thy mercy. I should deserve that thou shouldst abandon me to my own guilty wretchedness. But calling to mind the grace which my Redeemer has obtained for me, still do I supplicate thee with reliance and hope. Prolong yet further the term of my probation, and let me through thy assistance be brought to such a better state that I may never again dissipate my invaluable time in so unjustifiable a manner. Grant me thy Spirit that it may rule me, and gift me with an obedient heart, that will no longer mistake and slight its own well-being. I will walk before thee in devoutness. Be thou, O God, my shield, and my exceeding great reward.

MAY 1.

The Spring Morning.

At this pleasing season of the year every object prompts me to admire and contemplate my Creator. Whether I look towards the heavens or the earth I discover everywhere occasion for astonishment and rapture. Nature's whole domain is gloriously adorned; the splendour of the awakening sun, the jubilee of all breathing things, the melody of the birds, the verdure of the fields, whatever strikes my vision or my ear, announce to me the greatness of the adorable author of my being. To him at this natal hour of day the incense of thanksgiving arises from the universal altar of creation. The lark hails with his symphonies the break of light; the enchanting magnificence of the rural amphitheatre, each flower, each blade of grass, each blossoming tree, each newly-arrayed meadow excite glad songs of praise. How can I, at such a spectacle, remain silent or insensible! How can I hesitate to join the concert of gratitude, and to worship that bounteous God who executes such mighty works, and by his will performs such noble miracles! How highly I am esteemed by my Maker! Through his goodness I am raised far above all other creatures, therefore must it be my endeavour by piety and obedience to evince myself to be worthy of my exalted privilege. In this duty I will allow myself to be surpassed by nothing that exists. I will lend my tongue to the inferior race of beings, and their speechless acknowledgments shall be made vocal in my re-echoed strains.

Yet how can I duly laud thee, thou Ineffable! Thou art too elevated that my comprehension should soar to thy sublimity, or my voice express the attributes of thy majesty. How can I by my veneration honour the Eternal, who speaketh and it cometh to pass, who commandeth and it is executed; whose strong hand retains the solar orb in its course, and keeps the sea within its coasts; whose wisdom shows itself as excellent and as deserving of homage in the meanest insect as in the vast fabric of the globe! How can I humble myself sufficiently before the Omnipotent, who has produced all these innumerable worlds, which, revolving round their proper suns, crowd the regions of boundless space! How

little art thou, O mortal, thou child of dust, beside the Almighty, who reigneth from everlasting to everlasting! Cast thyself prostrate at the feet of him who gave thee a living soul. Confess that he is all, that thou thyself art nothing. Seek thy own greatness only in the possession of an understanding capable of knowing God, and of a heart that can with reverential awe appreciate his infinite worthiness and power. This gift makes thee a lord of the earth, and brings with it the utmost felicity. Thus illuminated, thy soul unfolds to thee a thousand charms, which would otherwise escape thy observation, and renders them at once a source of pleasure and devotion. Through this influence of the Spirit thou art qualified rightly to admire the productions of thy Creator, to exalt thyself above this sublunary sphere, and in higher realms to enjoy the presence of God, and be like to him and magnify him for ever. Ah! if thou art indeed destined to so eminent a state of happiness and glory, already here must thy mind be occupied with thy heavenly Father, who shall hereafter be the sole, unceasing subject of thy worship, thy love, thy praise. Employ thy faculties to his honour, and when thou perceivest how little thou art able perfectly to extol him, submit thyself humbly to his wisdom and government.

MAY 2.

Conviction of God's Providence.

What a happiness is it for me to believe in and to put my trust in a Providence! Can indeed any tranquillity of the mind, or any satisfaction of the soul, be greater than that which rests on the conviction that I am under the care of an invisible Being, who is infinitely good, powerful, and wise? Can I have any better-grounded hope than if I submit myself to that God who had me already in charge while I was yet a shapeless embryo, and forecast, and predisposed, even thus early, all that I should stand in need of during my whole life; who numbered my days, laid the foundation of my prosperity, limited my future misfortunes, and also ordered them in such a manner that they should tend ulti-

mately to my welfare? Can any earthly felicity be more perfect than that which is erected on this faith and on this assurance?—And why, O my soul, is it sometimes difficult for thee to adopt this persuasion? Why throwest thou so often thy confidence away from thee? though thou knowest how great a recompense it has! Is it not because, in thy folly, thou desirest that thy thoughts should be God's thoughts? O! look to the precious promises which the Lord has imparted to thee in his word: observe the fate of those who have relied on the Omniscient; and learn from all thy reflections that the Almighty provides for thee with paternal fidelity and divine wisdom.

Irrefragable proofs of this fact rise everywhere around me. I must call in question the brightness of the sun, the reality of the multitudinous systems of distant worlds which publish the glory of the Deity, and even doubt of my own identity, if I can be at all in doubt in regard to the providential superintendence of my God. Then is it my bounden duty to manifest my faith through my works, and this very day to banish all anxiety respecting the morrow. I must, therefore, live conformably to conviction; industriously, watchfully, and prudently, yet free from apprehension, full of affiance, and joyful in expectation. Yes, like a fond child, will I rely on the solicitude of my wise and benevolent Father; yield myself obediently to his commands, and consider only how I may become more and more worthy of his goodness through steadfastness and zeal in my calling. Yea, though he should even seem to withdraw from me his protection, yet will I not be dispirited, but even as did Job, will as firmly as I can, under every afflicting trial, remain steadfast in my faith: till my end comes I will not swerve from my hope. Nay, even though he should destroy my life, still will I trust in him.

Could I establish myself in this holy disposition of soul, all the vicissitudes of my life, all the attacks of calamity which I either experience or dread, would be unable to shake my fortitude, or to weaken my confidence. Amid embarrassments and disquietudes, under evils both present and impending, I should feel cheerful and calm, should be able to compose my bosom with patience, and enjoy my existence with thankfulness. I should even this day experience none

of that vexation with which the greater part of mankind is tormented. I should praise God for the past, avail myself contentedly of my present lot, and await my future destiny without terror. O God, strengthen my faith, and render me evermore deserving of thy gracious providence.

MAY 3.

The Voice of God in Expostulations, Warnings, and Chastisements.

Spared by thee, O God, to behold another morning, again do I hear that warning voice which exhorts me to acknowledge the excess of thy goodness, and carefully to take heed of the time allotted for my salvation. This invitation is so audible, and accompanied by such a gentle earnestness, that I should be utterly without defence were I to disobey the summons. But how little have I hitherto heeded thy voice, my God and my Lord! I heard it—indeed it startled me; I thought of it for a time; but I speedily forgot it again, and obliterated the impression which it had made on my heart. O! how often, when in pondering upon thy word I was savingly moved, and through the force of thy Spirit awakened from my slumber, have I recognised thy parental counsels in the emotions of my conscience! How often didst thou call me back from the way of sin, by placing before my eyes the appalling example of miserable transgressors, overtaken by perdition in the middle of the steep down which they dissolutely ran! How often didst thou invite me to seek thee, through the secret terrors of remorse, through the sorrows of my breast, and through the uneasiness with which my heart was burned by sin! How powerful was thy solicitation, so often as I approached the altar which reminded me of the vows of my infancy! How did thy voice strike me as I lay on the bed of sickness, and with trembling and fear expected the message that should summon me before thy tribunal! And how sweet, how kind, how irresistible, has been the persuasion of thy blessings! As every day thou openedst thy hand to bless me with thy bounty, rescuedst

me from numerous perils, preservedst for me my life and my breath; O! how eloquently didst thou speak to me through the demonstrations of thy favour—how tenderly didst thou thus allure me to thee by thy compassion!

But how often was I insensible to thy expostulation, unaffected by thy enticements, indifferent and light-minded! Thou stretchedst out thy arms to me, but I would not yield myself to thy embrace. The louder thy cry was that I should approach, the further I fled from thee. But shall I always be so destitute of feeling? The mountains hear thy voice and quake; the sea recoils at thy reproof; all nature is attentive to thy lips. The heavens are mute, and the angels hide their countenances, at thy command. Shall man alone then shut his ears against thee—alone be neither influenced nor roused? Alas! with how much shame does the reflection overwhelm me! How would all thy creatures, how would this dawning morn, accuse me before thee should I yet longer continue obdurate! Would even that last voice of thunder, which shall cite me to thy judgment, terrify me, if now thy voice of favour fails to touch me?

No; thou merciful God, let me not experience that frightful voice. Nay, argue with me still in thy warnings, thy chastisements, thy benefactions. Utter but thy word, I will hear, I will obey. Whatever thou this day biddest me to do, I will perform it; wheresoever thou directest me to go, I will follow thee; whatever thou appointest to me, be it good or evil, I will receive it with joy, endure it with resignation. I will submit my thoughts and my wishes to thy ordinance, and unlock my heart to Christ, who standeth at the porch. I will listen to thee that thou mayst give heed to me when I supplicate thee in agony of mind.

MAY 4.

The Nature of the Soul.

Amid the laborious researches which we institute to inquire into the nature and existence of the human soul, we generally overlook the duties which we ought chiefly to observe in relation to the soul itself. It is true, so much mystery

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presents itself to the investigator of the invisible spirit of man, that the most powerful understanding is forced to pause and confess its own incapacity. That, however, which evinces to us the high value of the soul, and instigates us to the assiduous preservation of it, is so evident and clear that the meanest comprehension may receive conviction. And to reflect on these important points forms the essential duty of all to whom God has vouchsafed so precious a gift as that of a soul.

How incalculable must be its worth, since in order to secure for it a blessed immortality, and to snatch it from perdition, God sent even his only-begotten Son into the world! How dear must my soul be to the Almighty, since he, whose Father is the Omnipotent, was constrained to shed his blood for its ransom! How estimable must my soul be in the consideration of the Deity, since for its instruction he has disclosed his revelation, and for its ministration appointed the celestial spirits who in perfect bliss encircle his throne rejoicing and worshipping! If the Creator himself has employed such extraordinary means to render my soul capable of everlasting felicity, what culpable ingratitude would it display, should I wish to do only those things which might deprive me of this vast advantage! God has taken the most signal measures to save my soul; what madness would it then be, should I exert all my efforts to destroy it! How unworthy should I be of that blessedness for which God has called it into existence, or what could I give to redeem my soul were it lost through sin and levity?

The loss of the soul's peace is irremediable. No earthly power, no penitence, no humiliation, can render back to me, if once forfeited, my spiritual tranquillity.—And can I then think of this without straining every nerve to obviate so severe a visitation? Ah! nothing ought so much to excite my zeal—my solicitude to guard the safety of my soul. Nothing ought to have so much mastership over my heart as to induce me to be unmindful of the immense value of my soul and its salvation. What do all pleasures profit me, if my conscience is not at ease? What will all the treasures of the world be to me, if my soul must despond and languish in the midst of them? What can the gain of the world serve me, if I lose my own soul?

Would that these sentiments might retain effectual sway over me during the whole day. Temptations enough will assail me, through which I may be deprived of the happiness and the composure of an approving conscience. Soon will the lusts of the world, soon will the charms of carnal possessions, so closely besiege my heart, that I may forget the claims of my soul. Then, O Jesus, let thy grace rescue me in my peril, and so restrain me that I may not plunge this soul into perdition; let thy cross strengthen me to fight boldly against all iniquity; and let the spectacle of that heaven, to which I am to be lifted up, powerfully elevate my soul towards thee, and incite it to strive only for the things above!

MAY 5.

The Misery of Man abandoned to himself.

If I were abandoned to my own strength; if I did not believe in a God, on whom all nature depends, who orders the course of all things, who embraces all creatures under his care and providence, and who regulates all events with wisdom and goodness; and if I knew not that this omnipotent Creator is my Father and my God also, what would the world become to me, what would become of myself? In danger I should have no refuge; in trouble no consolation; in prosperity no satisfaction; in adversity no hope; and in death no tranquillity. How desperate, lost, and wretched would my condition be! Would it not be better that I had never been born than that I should live here immured in such palpable darkness, and be totally ignorant of God?

How could I look with pleasure on this morning's vernal sun; how could I enter upon my new career of existence without terror and alarm, if I believed not in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth? But as I joyfully and firmly hold this persuasion, and the Spirit of the Lord powerfully convinces me of its truth, I can look forward without uneasiness to all the events of fate, and be composed in the most critical situations of life.

Am I inclined to sadness at the apprehension of disas-

trous times that may hereafter break forth; I am comforted by the thought that God can in a moment change the most menacing aspect of things, since to him nothing is impracticable. Though the world itself should crumble into atoms, God would remain my trust and my support. Do I dread the persecution, the hatred, and the malignity of enemies, God can cover me under the shadow of his wings, and subdue the most revengeful passions of my foes. Am I in peril from the secret machinations of the wicked, God can bring the purposes of the impious to nought; for all wisdom and strength are his. Do poverty and need overtake me, it is God who impoverisheth and enricheth, who woundeth and healeth: he can change indigence and necessity into wealth and abundance. Do I fall into violent sickness in which nature struggles with death—courage! God will not abandon me, if I forsake not him: he will render my pains supportable, revive my daunted fortitude, cheer my heart with his comfort, defend me against the attacks of the last assailant, and receive my soul into the bosom of his mercy.

Thus am I enabled to console myself under every occurrence, and to rejoice in the gracious dispensations of my God. The Ruler of the world is that infinitely beneficent Deity who loves me, and whose delight it is to do good; who knows all my wants; and who is strong to protect me, though the whole race of man should be united against me. His eyes are watchful over me both day and night, and in the midst of the wrath which I have deservedly excited by my transgressions, he remembers his mercy and grace in Christ Jesus. All-exalted as he is, he considers the lowly, and has compassion on the least of his creatures. Hallelujah! for the Lord Almighty reigneth. I will be glad and rejoice, and to him ascribe honour for ever.

MAY 6

Clinging to the Lord as our Defender, Father, and Guide.

How greatly does the thought comfort and elevate me, my God and my Lord, that thou ever remainest what thou art;

that thy years know no end; that I possess in thee a protector and a guide, of whom neither time nor death can deprive me, a Father who does not even then cease to love me when, in the folly and the weakness of my heart, I render myself undeserving of his favour; and a mighty defender not only for the season of distress, but for the hour of temptation! For what would my feeble and dispirited heart effect if thou, O God, wert not strong in my infirmity? if thou, through the operation of thy Spirit, didst not infuse into my mind the inclination to be virtuous, and then enable me to follow its impulse? if thou, through thy promises and thy grace, didst not restore my falling courage? O! how soothing is it to my heart that thou wilt to-day also arm it with force to meet the moment of trial, if I only think of thee, and trust in thee! How do I exult in the recollection that thou art not far from me with thy Spirit; and that I dare to rest my hopes in thy support! For I feel and confess, that without thee I am nothing; and that thy warnings alone can preserve me, thy promise alone console me, thy rewards alone fortify and excite me.

But so surely as I dare to anticipate thy aid, in like measure should I be culpable if I watched not over myself, and strove not, in godly fear, to work out my salvation; for to this end hast thou furnished me, thou bountiful Giver of all good gifts, with the endowments of reason, conscience, and faith; to this end thou hast granted to me thy holy word, and the sacred, unquenchable feeling of repentance and shame; and to this end likewise hast thou set before me the encouraging example of my Saviour.—O! then be this day my zeal and my endeavour above everything, directed to purifying and confirming my heart, that I may adhere to thee and walk in thy way. May the evening bear me witness that I have continued true to this pious resolution; and may I at night be able to reflect with tranquillity and cheerfulness on the labours of the day, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

MAY 7.

Peace of the Soul.

Thou longest for rest, O my soul, and findest it not, because thou hast not yet freed thyself from that which has hitherto robbed thee of peace, and loaded thee with vexation and care. Hast thou at any time seen an avaricious man who could ever be joyful from his heart? Knowest thou any of the great ones of the earth who spend their days without being often disappointed, disquieted, and burdensome to themselves? Which of them can say to the thunder, "Thou shalt not reach me?" or to the rolling billow, "Thou shalt not overtake me?" Learn then thy own imbecility. Canst thou command prosperity, that it shall follow thee; or adversity, that it shall depart far from thee? Call to the spring to tarry yet a little longer with its sweetness; charge the fragrant bloom of the rose that it vanish not so speedily; they will not obey thee, and thou shalt in vain nourish thy impotent wish. Abandon therefore the created, and seek the Creator. Cast the whole weight which oppresses thee upon Him, and by Him suffer thyself to be refreshed. Jesus died for thee. In this grand idea, whatever can cheer thee is contained. Now and henceforward thou canst hope for all without fearing that thy expectations will be deluded. Desires, passions, voluptuousness, self-love, and everything that occasions thy mental pain will fly from thee, and thou in the light of God's countenance shalt be glad. Peace and hilarity will smile around thee. No spring-day sun shall beam so serenely as thy days and nights will shine. Thou wilt be gifted with a composure of mind completely subject to the control of thy God, and will be as satisfied with a little, as if thou possessedst the whole earth with all its glory. The joys of the world to come will exalt thee above all the mutability, the uneasiness, and the troubles, of thy present abode.

Soul, that at the dawn of this day groanest after rest, O! avail thyself of the means which shall appease all thy sighs. Seek not quietude in those remedies which lull thy heart indeed asleep, but only to render it more miserable, and which cannot grant it lasting and true repose. Represent often and ex-

pressively to thyself that final change to which thou hastenest. That which tranquillizes thee not in death is no permanent good. But that which tempers the bitterness of dissolution, will sweeten thy life also: and nought, nought will do this except an unsullied conscience. Be strenuous then to procure this treasure, and thou wilt obtain in it all that is requisite to make thee a most happy and contented being. A pure conscience will prove a buckler against every calamity; it will give an extraordinary relish to the gratifications of life, and render the misery of thy pilgrimage supportable.

O God, neither for this day nor for any of my future ones can I supplicate a greater blessing than a good conscience. Be the fate which thou appointest and ordainest to me what it may; let death assault me when he will, I shall be in no respect unhappy if I hold my conscience undefiled.

MAY 8.

Amendment of Life.

Every new day a new invitation excites me to the amendment of my heart; for every new day brings with it fresh proofs of God's fatherly goodness, and new experiences of his grace. Though I have already slighted so many summons to grace, yet the Lord is not weary of calling to me. Alas! I must take contrition to myself, long-suffering God, that I have not so acknowledged thy grace as it deserved, and as thou mightest well expect from me. How many means hast thou not employed to awaken me ere now to repentance? But, ah! thy favour was lavished in vain, or at least it produced not in me the fruit which it ought to have brought forth. Otherwise how much nearer must I long since have come to thee? How much more must I have been exercised in the habit of self-denial! How resplendent in holiness and righteousness would thy Spirit already shine in me! Yet have patience with me, merciful Father! Withdraw not thy grace from me, though I have so frequently abused it. Let me waste no more the time of my salvation, but this day, this very day, seek thy countenance.

Yes, even to day. How should I delay my repentance till to-morrow, or any more distant period? Am I certain that I shall be alive to-morrow? And though I should live, though I should attain to an advanced old age, and at last meet death on a couch of lingering disease, am I certain that it will then be possible for me to procure the grace of God, or that I shall then still possess strength enough for the essential purpose of reformation? May not my conscience, against the warnings of which I have so long hardened myself, become at last silent and insensible? May not even that divine grace, which I have so long contemned, become wholly indifferent to me? May not those truths, death, judgment, and eternity, lose at length all influence over my heart? Such probabilities change, for a vast number of the dying, into the most frightful realities. And what if I should belong to this multitude, who see too late that they have been fools and forfeited their salvation?

No: instructed by so many warnings, excited by my conscience, and bound in duty by my faith, I will act more wisely and more in the fear of God. However hard it may be for my heart to renounce sin, I will shun no conflict, recoil before no obstacle. To-day, while I have still sufficient force, to-day will I begin to alter my life and disposition; and in the evening my conscience shall testify to me, that I have endeavoured to make myself better, and that I have lived before God. How can I procrastinate, I, who am approaching every day nearer to the grave and judgment?

MAY 9.

The Omnipresence of God.

God is everywhere. — What a sublime heart-elevating thought is this! When I contemplate the immense magnitude of this our globe; when I consider, that a body flying with the utmost imaginable rapidity would require more than twenty years to reach our sun; when I recollect, that the countless multitude of stars are actually themselves suns, although they appear to my eyes only as illuminated points,

because they are fixed at a distance so much greater from the earth than the orb which enlightens it, how incomprehensible must the idea seem to me, that God oversees the world even to its smallest part, that he is present to all worlds, and knows all that happens, even to the most minute animal! Notwithstanding all the inconceivableness of this idea, certain however it is, that God is everywhere; God is at once nigh to the whole world and to me also. Shall then a God, who has so skilfully ordered the vast universe of creation, without exception of the meanest worm that crawls—shall not he possess understanding and intelligence sufficient to know all things? Shall he that formed the spirit be ignorant of the thoughts, conceptions, and purposes of the soul? What can confine the Infinite? What can limit the Immeasurable? What knowledge can be wanting to the Omniscient? What power can set bounds to the Almighty?

Be struck with amazement, O my soul, at this contemplation! Who can sufficiently admire that infinite intelligence which superintends the whole incalculable creation, that knows and understands everything, that numbers with a single glance the lights of heaven and the hairs of the head? Who can enough admire that amplitude of power which is continually employed in all places, and at the ends of the earth; which, at the same time that it restrains the spheres within their orbits, forms and provides alike for the grovelling insect and the birds of the air? Yet be not merely wrapt in astonishment, O my soul, but let the conviction of these truths influence likewise thy sentiments. It must become thy most predominant thought, that the Omniscient and Omnipresent is ever near to thee; that God penetrates with a look to the lowest depths of the heart; that he knows thee to the core; and perceives each rising lust, each concealed desire, and every original impulse of thy conduct; that no spot is so remote, no corner so dark, that he cannot behold thee. And these considerations, while they erect for thee a bulwark against evil, will also open to thee a never-failing source of consolation. The remembrance of the all-present Deity will cheer thee, when thou weepest in secret; when thou endurest afflictions, which thou canst not reveal to any mortal being; and when thou canst expect no human aid. Through the same reflection

thou wilt likewise be supported under the various vicissitudes of life. Thou mayest go where thou wilt, thou walkest everywhere visible to the providence of God, under whose sway the earth and firmament subsist; who sees from his throne all the dwellers of the world; who regulates all the resolutions and actions of men; and who takes care without end for thy deliverance and salvation.

MAY 10.

The Following the Example of Jesus.

WHAT more salutary plan can I pursue on this new entrance which I make into the world, than to present to myself my Jesus as a pattern, and strive to shape my life according to his example. This is my destination, my honour, and my happiness. The nearer I approach to Jesus, the nearer I advance to my own real felicity; the further I depart from him, the further I leave behind me my true interest and my eternal appointment. O! be it then my most earnest endeavour and most zealous wish to follow my Saviour with a ready and cheerful heart, both in what he performed and what he suffered! His image shall be before my eyes in all that I do. I will ask myself, "Would my Redeemer have acted thus under similar circumstances? Would he have yielded to such a temptation, or fled from such a conflict? Would he have received such wrongs with vexation, or would he under such an injury have manifested calmness or anger? Would he at the spectacle of this miserable being have remained so stern and so insensible?" But if I am obliged to reply negatively to these interrogations, and confess my disposition to be unchristian, how dare I thus permit myself to be downcast, wrathful, and pitiless, and yet call myself his disciple, and account myself one of the redeemed? O! how beneficial and necessary is it, therefore, to me to keep his example perpetually in my view, and accustom myself to the reiterated contemplation of his cross; to reject all the futile though enticing pleasures of the world, by which I am surrounded; and to use all industry to imitate that copy of

mental resignation, lowliness, patience, and truth, which Jesus has given and bequeathed to me as the rule of my conduct. And out of thy sufferings, my Redeemer, will I provide for myself strength to confirm me in this godly exercise. If here I have been like to thee in holiness and humility, so shall I hereafter be like to thee in felicity and glory.

Still how insufficient am I, if thy Spirit does not itself empower me to follow thee! But, God be praised, the streams yet flow to me, from which I may draw invigoration and grace! Through thy aid, O Jesus, will I subdue the corruption of my heart, my obstinacy, my fickleness, my lusts. Through thee I will bear about with me the image that makes me worthy of all respect of mankind, and even acceptable to thy Father himself. Through the potency of thy pangs I will overcome the obstacles, vanquish all temptations; and be at last able to render back my spirit into the hands of the Lord, with the same tranquillity of mind as thou didst resign thine. Through thee shall I then be admitted into that assembly of the glorified, who have followed thee in faith.

MAY 11.

God's unceasing Affection towards his Children.

What can be for me and my fellow-sinners more consolatory and encouraging than the thought, that God regards his children with favour and approbation when they are earnest and ardent to fulfil his views and his commands, and to do good to one another? What would be wanting to my happiness and contentment, did my conscience bear me witness, that through faith, obedience, and love, I am become worthy of thy divine grace? Dare I congratulate myself on this testimony? Did I never murmur when God doomed me to affliction, or make my heart heavy with care? Was I always ready to yield in humble reliance to the decrees of Providence? Have I never sought my temporal prosperity by other means than those of rectitude and truth? Has God's grace been above all things to me ever precious and

dear? Alas! how sensible am I that I have often shown myself undeserving of the favour of my heavenly Father, and often in the weakness of my heart offended against him. But thou, O Lord, and universal Parent, art long-suffering, patient, and of great goodness: thou enterest not into judgment with thy creatures. How much comfort, tranquillity, and exultation does this belief convey to me! How strongly does it confirm the resolution of my soul to walk before thee, my God, in piety and sincerity, and through filial obedience to procure for myself some further claim to thy mercy! Yes, it is now my firm purpose to labour for thy applause alone, thou just and holy God, and not for the arbitrary acclaim of men; in stillness and secrecy to do the works of beneficence; to strive assiduously to cleanse my heart; and to submit myself with reverence to thy ordinances, even when they run in opposition to my own wishes. Thus will my heart be shielded against all the temptations which attend ambition and the love of fame: thus I shall enjoy uninterrupted peace of mind, and be able to look forward full of hope to the uncertain future.

MAY 12.

Daily Blessings.

Every day has its vexations; but every day has also its blessings and its joys. To convince thyself of this, O my soul, compare thy daily troubles with thy daily happiness. What is it that I have daily to suffer? I feel perhaps the irksomeness of labour, the sharpness of poverty; I experience, perhaps, the irritation arising from some slander or wrong directed against me by my neighbour; it may be that the infirmities of my fragile frame afflict me; that I live in contest with my passions; or I may have some private sorrow, some hidden cause of misery, which forces sighs from my bosom. Whether a part only of these griefs, or all of them united, be this day destined to me, still I must confess, notwithstanding, that each day has its blessings. The sunbeam that warms me, the draught that solaces the cravings of

my thirst, the food which gratifies my appetite, the sleep which invigorates me,—all these are blessings. Every day the patience of God bears with me; every day his Spirit operates on my heart; every day I am permitted to edify myself through the word of the Lord; every day I can send up my prayers to his celestial abode; these are my daily joys. And where remain my extraordinary blessings and benefits? The friends, in whose embrace I find contentment; the agreeable intelligence of some wished-for or unexpected event; a victory over my heart; some prosperous occurrence, which I had not anticipated; and even, out of every vexation, the blessing of being humble, endued with foresight, and resigned,—are not these pure benefits, which indemnify me for all my concomitant distresses? And is not the day itself, in which I live, a free gift of grace? I say, my life is short; but a day is yet shorter than life, and a trouble shorter than a day; while God's grace endureth for ever.

Would that I might, by this consideration, be prompted to moderate my woes, and to silence my complaints! Would that I might as carefully reckon up the blessings received from God, as, to the increase of my torment, I am industrious to enumerate my grievances! On no day shall I be bereft of opportunities of observing the goodness of my heavenly Father, if I am only attentive to his ways; and I shall every day, however pregnant it may be with disappointments, be still compelled to praise him, if I have but trust in his governance, and comfort myself under all circumstances in patience and hope.

O soul, cease from thy wailings. What is it that disturbs thee? Perhaps some deceived expectation of sensual pleasure that would alienate thee from God! Perhaps some evil which thy simple understanding deems an advantage! Perhaps some object which restrains thee in thy headlong course! And thou would on this account lament? No: be comforted and undismayed, and cling to the Lord. Forget not the good which the Lord does to thee, even when he chastises thee. Constantly consider thy destination, and the end for which God has placed thee on the earth. The vicissitudes of thy life ought to remind thee of the vanity of the world, and the permanent delights of the second and perpetual Paradise. Soon will dawn those blissful days of eternity, in which there shall

be no woes, but only unmixed ecstasy; no punishments, but only perfect grace; no sighs, but only songs of praise. Then wilt thou forget all thy afflictions; or if thou shouldst remember them, thou wilt rejoice that every day had its vexations.

MAY 13.

The Providence and Equity of God justified.

My web of life is interwoven with many a gloomy destiny. I know not where the way will end, in which the providence of God calls me to proceed. I see plans long since projected remaining still unaccomplished, and find myself in a labyrinth, out of which I perceive no issue; I discover in the future, events which seem to argue against the kindness of God's purposes; and a distribution of his gifts, which casts me into profound and melancholy meditations. Many of my fellow-mortals have, without exertion, or through injustice, attained that summit of prosperity, to which I, with all my best directed efforts, have not been able to rise. One man enjoys health in the midst of his dissipation; another is afflicted, in his temperance, with disease. That man, without possessing a single good quality, is loved and honoured; this, notwithstanding all his integrity, continues the object of malice, calumny, and disrespect. These and similar incongruities of human life sometimes startle my belief in the wisdom and the goodness of God. But, praise be to the Lord, I have also other proofs of the guardianship of Providence, by which I can better judge of the divine attributes. That elevation to which the worthless had exalted himself, contributed only to accelerate his fall. The voluptuary's days of ease tended only to infuse the poison of distemper more deeply into his constitution. The pomp of the lofty was glittering wretchedness. The applause of the crowd was, to the solicitors of renown, a step towards oblivion. The sinner's prosperity was the instrument of his perdition.

All-wise Providence! I will no longer censure thy ways. They may indeed be dark; but the darker and more unsearchable thy purposes appear the more sacred and blessed I will

account them. I will not fret myself, thou God of mercy, over the mysteriousness of thy appointments; but by contemplating the manifest and self-evident instances of thy favourable providence, strengthen myself in thy hope and affiance. And how numerous are these instances; how noble and how consolatory are the annals of thy governance, which the history of all eras and all people exhibit to me! Am I not myself a witness to thy providence? How many dark passages of my life have already rendered themselves clear! How much which I had considered misfortune, have I afterwards found to have been the means of augmenting my happiness! How often have my tears of sorrow been changed into tears of joy! How often have I commenced the day with sobs, and closed it with accents of gladness! And how much more luminously still will heaven make apparent thy dispensations!

Hence then must my confidence and my faith be fortified by the contemplation of thy wondrous ordinances. Hence, with a secure heart, will I expect from thee everything that is needful for my happiness. To thee will I commend all my doings, and trust that thou wilt make all go well with me. I know not the road in which thou wilt this day conduct me; but I know that, let the way be what it may, it will, on a candid review, give me cause to confess, "Lord, righteous and true are all thy paths."

MAY 14.

Calculation of lost Hours.

How many hours must I consider lost, if the Lord demanded from me an account of them! Can I calmly approach my judge and say, "Lord, every hour has seen that which thou commandedst performed!" Among the many thousand hours which I have lived, how great a number have been spent in inactivity, and what a still greater number have been dissipated in foolish undertakings! How many hours have I devoted to the satisfaction of my pleasures!—These hours are lost! How many hours are there in which I have left undone the good which came immediately within my province, and which

I had so many opportunities of accomplishing!—These hours are lost! How many hours have I employed agreeably, it is true, to the statutes of God, and in the honest prosecution of my calling; yet not with a view of serving the Lord or my brethren, but of gratifying my ambition or furthering my temporal advantage!—These hours are lost! How many hours have I dedicated to objects harmless indeed in themselves, but which the moment they overstep their proper bounds, lose instantly their character of innocence!—These hours are lost! But if I take an impartial estimate of my life, has not the greater part of its hours been of this description? And must I not, therefore, subscribe to the frightful confession, "Almost all my hours are lost!"

But how many hours will there remain to me to lavish thus inconsiderately? Perhaps those of my future existence amount not to an eighth portion of those which I have thus profusely squandered in foolishness and sin? Perhaps the present hour only belongs to me? Dare I at any rate anticipate that I have still so many hours to live as will enable me to make reparation for those which are lost? Alas! no. I will therefore employ this very moment in repenting of the past, and thinking rationally of the time to come. The shorter this period may be, the more precious ought it to appear to me. I will apply redoubled industry to fulfil the ends for which this finite life is granted to me to prepare myself for eternity, and render myself worthy of the life everlasting. I will constantly picture to myself the conduct of my Saviour, who lost no hour which was allotted to him on this earth. I will be busy in virtue while the day of existence still lasts, for the night of death is at hand, when the possibility of labour ceases. An hour may easily arrive, the loss of which will render me wretched for ever. I will not turn from the reflection that for me many an hour may yet teem with sadness. The more proved, if so, will be my piety, the purer my pleasures, the greater my reward. I shall find all my well-spent hours again in heaven.

And thou, O Jesus, whose whole existence was more guiltless than any hour which the most perfect among the godly passes, let the merits of thy life expiate my years of inutility and wrong. Let me during this very day consider and practise that which is expedient for my peace. This day also ap-

pertains to my days of grace. Incline me so to live that it may not in death redound to my torment, and in eternity to my destruction.

MAY 15.

The Satisfaction arising from Prayer.

How forcibly do I feel when I pray with fervour and sanctity of heart, that prayer composes me into that frame of mind which renders me worthy of the blessings of God, and joyful in hope! For when I thus pray, in how lively a manner do I at once reflect on my manifold transgressions of the commandments of God, and also on my inward repentance and amendment! Since, how would it be possible for me to pray with joy and confidence, so long as my heart continued unreformed, and my conscience told me that I merited the divine vengeance? While I elevate my heart to the all-bounteous Father, how sensibly do I experience that filial reliance on his goodness, which increases his blessings towards me, as often as with humility I confess that I am not worthy of the mercy which he shows to me. But it is permitted to me, under this unworthiness, to entreat yet further blessings from God? Yes, through Christ, I have the consoling conviction that my Father, who is in heaven, hears with approbation the confiding supplications of his grateful children: through Christ my Saviour, I have access to my Father. And therefore do I feel, under the cares and distress of this life, so comforted and strengthened when I offer up my devotions, when I complain of my afflictions to the infinitely Good, and implore his support. Yes, it is the greatest privilege which God has granted to his family in the faith, that they dare to pray to him, and pour out their hearts before him. What greater happiness can be imagined on earth than to be able to look up to heaven in purity of heart, and exclaim, "Thou art my trust, O God!" Blessed is the Christian who knows this peace, and grounds his prayer on the consciousness that Jesus Christ is on his side.

This happiness, this peace, my acts of worship must like-

wise procure for me. And how? Do I not already feel myself stronger than I was before?

MAY 16.

The Christian's Courage supported under all Calamities by Confidence in God.

How often have I already, in the long hours of trial which have composed my life, learned by experience that a firm trust in the Lord alone elevates and fortifies the depressed soul, and that my heart will never fail in courage, fortitude, and comfort, so long as it continues pious and devoted to God. I must confess to myself that I have been often fretful and dispirited, when I could not fathom the purposes of God in the progress of my fate, when his help tarried long, and when it seemed to me as if he had withdrawn from me his grace. Then would I ask in my discontentment, "How have I deserved that thou shouldst prove me thus sharply, thou Incomprehensible; in what have I offended, that thou thus deprivest me of thy assistance and thy benefactions?" But when I recollected that I had no right to demand blessings from God, and that I should be reduced to extreme wretchedness were he to deal strictly with me, then did I cease to murmur, then was I ashamed of my own ingratitude, then did I perceive that God, even in the evil days of my existence, removes not far from me with his blessing, and that in me he never left his goodness without a witness.

But ought not such extraordinary divine favour to induce me to serve God with a still more religious observance? What can be more natural than this conclusion? I have become, through Christ, the child of God: the lusts of the flesh, the follies of the world, correspond not with the quality of my condition, nor with the hopes of eternal life, which God has produced in my heart. I am too dearly bought to be the slave of the world and of sin. My utmost diligence must be exerted not to lose that grace, of which through Christ I have been held worthy.

Thou eternal Spirit, form my soul to these meritorious sen-

timents. Rule, instigate, and inspire me, that under thy guidance I may escape the toils which are laid to entrap my virtue. Give me enlightened eyes to see the dangers which surround me, and a courageous heart to combat against them. Conduct me in the path which I ought to tread, and let me not wander into those ways of error which may mislead me to a distance from my destination. Let me be attentive to the emotions which thou wilt this day operate in my heart, and not obstinately stifle them. Amid the various accidents, which may to-day arise to occasion me uneasiness and care, support me with thy consolations, and let the persuasion of that happiness which I have to hope for in eternity become ever stronger and more lively in my mind. And in this manner so prepare me that, when it is thy will, I may depart from this world with composure and resignation.

MAY 17.

The proper Employment of the Soul's Faculties.

Lord of my day, Father of my life! thou hast given me a soul capable of knowing thee and contemplating thy works. Highly exalted above the irrational creation, I know my greatness, my destination, my immortality. Thou hast conferred upon me an invaluable superiority, by granting me understanding, which is the noblest of gifts, because through it I am qualified to entertain a conception, though an imperfect one, of thee, thou eternal Deity! O! teach me to use this privilege to thy honour, that to thee I may consecrate all the attributes of my intellect; may penetrate always more deeply into the blessed knowledge of thy will, and daily increase in my love towards thee. Let this be the chief aim and eye-mark of my spirit. Through thee I have obtained the noble capacity for studying and learning science, and the laws of nature. But amid all the pleasures which this species of wisdom presents to me, I never at any time feel my heart so invigorated and elevated as when I employ my mental faculties in considering thy unerring decrees and thy holy word, and in meditating on my Christian vocation.

I will confirm myself, O Lord, in this exercise; I will concentrate all the powers of my capacity in thy glorification. And may all the benefits which I have received from thee, from the first moment of my life to the present day, be imprinted on my memory! Not in my solitary hours alone, but even in the noisy tumult of the world and in its transactions, I must never forget how highly my soul has been ennobled by the merits of my Saviour; I must not forget that thou, O Jesus, through thy death hast obtained for it a blessed immortality: I must never forget how sacred the duties are which thou requirest from thy followers. Thy doctrines, thy demeanour, thy commandments, shall be profoundly engraven on my heart, in order that I may constantly reflect how religiously I am bound patiently to strive in good works after eternal life. But I will also at the same time banish from my remembrance the enchantments of sin, the fascinations of the world, the injustice of my foes, the poignancy of my sufferings, and all the hardships of my temporal course. Thus, thus will I dedicate my life to the Lord.

I will dismiss the images and the impressions of the senses from my heart, and endeavour to renovate in their utmost vivacity only those affections which co-operate to my salvation. When my eyes would wander to the idol of the passions, or my soul amuse itself with the imagination of foolish wishes, then must the spectacle of my Saviour, as he conflicted for me on the Mount of Olives, as he struggled for me on the cross, as he bled for me in death, stand present to my sight. Should the possessions of the earth seem to obtain dominion over my mind, I will go with my thoughts to that other world, where wealth that cannot be consumed, and true and lasting gratifications, invite my acceptance. My will shall long after the Lord, and with him, the supreme God, shall my inclinations be exclusively engaged. I will flee from the deceitful glare of a glittering exterior, and only labour to acquire and preserve the treasure of a pure conscience.

If, through thy assistance, thou God that helpest the faithful, I bring these my resolutions to perfection, my days will glide smoothly and pleasantly along. I shall this day, even in regard to my worldly welfare, live without any anx-

ious apprehension, since I shall be able, under all circumstances, to rejoice in thy blessing and in thy support. And though I should procure no other gain, the gain of my soul will render me superlatively rich and happy.

MAY 18.

Irresolution and Want of Constancy in good Purposes.

My natural imbecility is in nothing more evident than when I consider the numerous good resolutions which I have from time to time formed in my heart, but never carried into accomplishment. How many unexecuted purposes lie dormant in my breast? How much do I promise to God at the early blush of each succeeding day, at the celebration of the sacramental supper, in sickness, and under bodily decay! How often are my devout intentions forced to serve as the substitute of actual piety! And where is the fulfilment? Through what do I evince that I am earnest in my designs? This much is however certain: God has not even in this regard left himself unwitnessed in me. From him originated the virtuous determinations which arose in my mind, and through which he would have impelled me to the practice of righteousness. But, that I have not more faithfully availed myself of God's assistance towards the performance of good works, this is indeed a melancholy proof of my irresolution, my indolence, my obstinacy, and my levity of disposition. It is true, I am not without excuses, nor disencumbered of obstacles; but are the first well-founded, or the latter insurmountable? Can I apologize for myself by alleging my inability, when I know that both inclination and action proceed from God in everything that appertains to holiness, according to his own pleasure? Or have opportunities failed me for the prosecution of my plans of godliness? How could I maintain this, and my whole life not come forward to convict me of falsehood? And what are the obstacles by which I have been thus totally defeated? They are obstacles of which I must be ashamed. And how great, on the other hand, is the detriment which I have thence drawn

upon myself? How much good have I neglected? Numerous opportunities of virtuous conduct have I thus lost, and seriously wounded my conscience, while my heart has been rendered more callous and more rebellious, and I have only roused against myself the anger of God, and forfeited the peace of my mind.

Ah! that I were as true to my purposes as the prodigal son, who not only resolved to return to his father, but really arose and hastened to him! Ought I not this morning to form his salutary resolution? O! that it yet might not, like my former resolutions, disappear with the morning itself, or perhaps still sooner! Shake off thy distractions, O soul, and be collected. Carefully mark every virtuous emotion that stirs within thee. Delay not the execution of thy intentions till the future, since thou hast thine own heart as little in subjection as the future. Renew with the present day the bond which thou hast broken so frequently.

Lord, to thee is my whole heart exposed; to thee are known the determinations which at this morning's dawn I establish in my mind. Thou seest how weak, how inconstant, how obdurate my heart is. O! do thou render it strong, steadfast, and joyful in the practice of good. Incessantly influence my soul by those holy incentives which thou, through thy Spirit, awakenest within me, and aid me to accomplish the views which I entertain, that I may not disregard my own salvation, and go down, with all my resolutions, into perdition.

MAY 19.

The Wonders of the Night, and Value of Sleep.

Once more I have awoke from sleep. My faculties have been invigorated, my life has made itself young again; and I now spring with alacrity of heart to the exercise of that vocation to which the providence of God has called me. But how can I enter upon the new career of existence which is re-opened to me, without thanking thee, thou preserver of my days, for the recent proof of goodness which

thou hast vouchsafed to me, inasmuch as that I slept sweetly and tranquilly during the past night, and behold the present morning with cheerfulness and in continued health! How amazing, O Lord, are the wonders of the night! How great are the benefits of sleep! Amply as the stars, which enlighten the nocturnal darkness, glorify thee, so conspicuously am I, when slumbers close my eyes, and steal from me my consciousness, a testimony of thy omnipotence and of thy goodness. Never did I before contemplate with equal earnestness or equal emotion, the miracles of thy almighty power, which a single night displays to me. I will direct my first thoughts, O Lord of my being, to the benefits which I have received from thee on my bed of refreshment.

How kind and admirable is the apparatus which thou hast devised for the excitement of sleep! Darkness and stillness in unison invite us to take rest. No mother can be so solicitious for the placid quiet of her slumbering babe, as thou, who with such tender foresight providest for the refreshment of thy children, and for the faithful repose of all. How much would sleep lose of its agreeableness, had I in that state the power to be concerned about the fate which may perhaps be impending over me! But in my happy unconsciousness I do not once observe even the instant perils that may urge upon me: though the murderer stand beside my couch, or the robber pursue his trade of violence. Amid the numerous dangers to which sleep leaves me exposed, I remain void alike of anxiety and alarm, because an invisible hand defends me, and the Shepherd of Israel, who neither sleeps nor doses, watches over me. Hence arises the beneficent restoration both of body and soul, which sleep imparts to me, and hence its extraordinary and strengthening pleasantness.

O! how could I lie down to rest, how could I awake, without remembering these demonstrations of thy mercy! Yet how often do I fall asleep, and rise again, without considering how much this change conduces to my happiness! Perhaps I should know it better, if on the preceding night, instead of experiencing delicious ease, I had told the tedious hours, and, sighing, longed for day. O how culpable should I be, if the painful privation of this exquisite bounty could alone bring me to the grateful acknowledgment of its

value! No, my God, the more frequently and the less uninterruptedly I enjoy thy gifts, the more thankfully will I esteem and extol thee for them. Make every morning an incentive to me to magnify, with hymns of praise, that benevolence which every creature feels. But yet more let me so employ each rise of day as to consecrate to thee my revived powers and my renewed existence. I must not, however, be so inactive during the sunny hours as I was during the gloom of the night. But still shall my soul be as free from care and as composed as it was in my sleep. In thee, who without any trouble or anxiety on my part has permitted me to pass so many nights, in thee ought I ever to put my trust. That eye which guards me in sleep, will also in the day look down upon me and tend all my steps. Lord, I place my hope in thee; thou lettest not them come to harm who with confidence rely upon thee.

MAY 20.

Fluctuation of Time and temporal Things.

HUMAN life is full of vicissitudes: there is no one moment of it exactly similar to another. Our condition is continually changing; though we often remark the rapidity of this alteration as little as we feel that the globe revolves on its axis. Even the most agreeable things, nay, those in particular, are subject to instability. I am now healthful, lively, and cheerful. But shall I be so in the following hour? Then, perhaps, I shall already have to contend with the pains of sickness, or with death. And this moment, in which I commune with God, even this is on the wing! And where is it now? What trace of it remains behind? Truly, it presents a melancholy prospect to my mind, when I reflect on this universal mutability; and every hour observe how irrevocably time flies, and with it my earthly existence;—when I consider that I every day approach nearer to the instant when my mortal body shall lie destitute of life, of comeliness, and vigour. How delighted am I when the arms of cherished friends encircle me; when a reciprocal affection unites our hearts to each other, and one common sentiment

makes my distresses theirs! But when I think of their liability to death, and of the hour when it may perhaps become my sad office to close their eyes; alas! I cannot then, as I look upon them, refrain from weeping! And ye, wealth, honour, pleasure, hope, how greatly do ye often comfort me in life! But when I recollect your fleetness and your uncertainty, I cease to console myself with you, and to rejoice in you. How sparkle my eyes as they welcome thee, thou dawning sun! Yet how heavily am I grieved, when the conviction smites my soul, that to my eyes the sun will be some day darkened, and the morning cheerless to my heart!

At such ideas the mind must be of necessity depressed; but fortify thyself, O soul, and be not wholly abandoned to sorrow. The transitoriness of the terrestrial creation ought to imbue thee with wisdom and devotedness to God. Even this inconstancy of all that is worldly may unfold to thee the greatness of the omnipotence of the Lord. In his hands rest all the changes of thy life and fortune, and each of them contributes its share to the purifying of thy heart, and to the exaltation of thy spirit. And how prudently wilt thou at length wean thy heart from its mundane affections, when thou considerest the nature of the objects to which it seems to be so irremediably spell-bound; how little wilt thou mourn over bereavements, when thou hast already convinced thyself of the early probability and necessity of their occurrence! Thou wilt enjoy their pleasures; but their unsteadiness will teach thee not to sacrifice to them the quiet of thy bosom. Thou wilt value the possessions of this temporal state according to their desert; but from the experience that they are perishable, thou wilt moderate thy attachment towards them. Thou wilt admire the beauty and the charms of the spring; yet at the same time cull from every flower the wisdom not to covet that which is of the earth, but to aspire at those things which belong to heaven. And hence will there arise in thee an ardent desire for that better life where neither change nor alteration shall find admission. The oftener thou representest to thyself the evanscence and the brevity of human gratifications, the more strongly wilt thou be persuaded of the certainty of a higher condition of felicity. And this, this alone will compensate for the instability of all else.

MAY 21.

Consolation arising from the Transitoriness of Affliction, as well as of Joy.

PRAISE be to God! my sufferings and my afflictions are also transient. If all things else under the sun were fugitive, while these alone were subject to no change, then should I indeed have reason to bemoan my fate. But, to my comfort, those things which outwardly disturb me are likewise variable. Often in the same hour in which I weep, my tears are dried up; and if I commenced it with lamentations, I end it with rejoicings. Of this truth have I not received in my life frequent and agreeable proofs? How often have I bewailed in the morning of the day, and said, "The Lord has forgotten me?" and yet ere the evening came have I been forced to confess, "Never has the Lord allowed that I should not testify of him!" In the midst of the acuteness of my pains, God has often prepared for me a balm which soothed all my woes into oblivion. Hence how unjust many a time have been my complaints of the duration of my misery, how wrongful my distrust, and how inconsistent my murmurs against the providence of God! In order to tranquillize myself I needed only to have regarded the manner in which God had heretofore led his children. The life of a Joseph, the destiny of a Job, the rescue and preservation of a David, even the humiliation of my Jesus himself, would have been far more than sufficient to convince me how kindly and how wisely God directs the events of human life.

But how should I dishonour the excellence of the skilful and benignant Ruler of all mortal affairs, were I not for the subsequent part of my life to extract consolation and joy out of this experience! How little should I deserve prosperous hours if I could not endure my hours of misfortune with composure! This day will not be without its distresses! Numerous circumstances will arise to render me uneasy and sad! Be it so; this day shall prove for my heart a day of exercise in patience and resignation. I will not vex myself about the time to come, but judge of it by the past, and look only to this, that I may live throughout the present day du-

teously and in prudent solicitude for the welfare of my soul. I will not dwell solely upon my sufferings, which are just now perhaps grievous to me. I will think equally on that season when my trouble shall be turned into gladness, and my wailings into strains of felicitation. Be this season as far distant as it may, yet such a happy alteration will certainly occur, though it should take place in the minute of my death. Then will everything be explained; then will all the moments which now appear incomprehensible, be finally solved and rendered intelligible to my understanding. Then even in regard to me the shout shall be, "Wonderful beginning! glorious end!"

Perhaps, however, this day I shall myself be visited neither by sufferings nor painful feelings. Still there will be around me a large multitude of the wretched, who will be compelled to groan over their misery. I will endeavour in respect to these to assume the disposition of my God, and strive as far as possible to promote their alleviation and relief. This occupation of charity will one day cheer me in my own sorrows, and incline others affectionately to sympathize with me, when my turn to mourn shall present itself. And though even this should not be the case, God himself will take care for me, and bring my concerns to an advantageous issue.

MAY 22.

Beauty of the Creation.

This beauteous morning opens to me in its advance the grandest and the noblest of scenes, and beseechingly invites me to contemplate the wonders of God. Wherever I look, I find cause to regard with astonishment that exalted Being who with incomprehensible wisdom and goodness establishes the seasons, and rules all the changes of nature. Do I raise my eyes on high, the spectacle of the sun and of the whole circle of heaven charms me into rapture. The morning sky sparkles, superbly arrayed in the lustre of the carnation of dawn. The darkness vanishes around, and a sweet, refreshing

air arises. The triumphant light beams with unutterable majesty. And what is all the gorgeous pomp of monarchs, what all the splendour of imperial palaces, in comparison with this overwhelming brilliancy?—The earth also displays to me the riches of the miracles of God. The bloom which decks the trees, the flowers which adorn the meadows, the balmy odour which the atmosphere exhales, the dew-drops that glisten on the grass, and every plant, as it were, enchased in pearls—all these glories of the morn elevate my heart to ecstasy and applause. And the purposes of all these things are as beneficent as their appearance is enchanting. The blossom which so delights the gaze of the beholder feeds the sprouting fruit, and constitutes the first promise of nourishment. The fields are for the healthful a state-chamber of parade, and for the indisposed an abode of convalescence. In the realm of animated nature everything is busy for my subsistence, my pleasure, and my gratification; thus the cattle offer their strength, their milk, and their flesh for my support; and the birds of the heavens infuse transport into my heart through their melody. Nature with her whole family serves me and waits upon me; she brings the produce of their united industry, and pours it out into my lap. Who can ever sufficiently admire the goodness which has ordered all this? The Maker of the world has everywhere associated agreeableness with utility. He forms all things as perfectly pleasing as if ornament were their only design; and at the same time as beneficial, as if usefulness were their sole intention. How greatly ought such views to raise my conception of the Creator's infinite kindness towards the human race! How ravished with this most bounteous Deity, how thankful to him ought they to render me! So must then the grateful remembrance of my God, thus exhaustless in his mercy, constantly accompany me, and occupy my whole heart with his love! The contemplation of his gifts, and joy over his unsearchable works, must sanctify all my pleasures, and fill me with a holy ecstasy! How many opportunities will this day afford me, O God, of acknowledging thee and thy greatness! Each blade of herbage, each flower, each mead, each grove, will proclaim to me thy omnipotent benevolence, and excite me to thankfulness.

MAY 23.

The Christian's Inquiry into the Number of his future Days

How pressingly do the speediness and the uncertainty of my life require that I should dispose of my time with wisdom, and let no moment pass without employing it to advantage! What is the period which I have yet to live? Is it a hundred, is it a thousand years? And though this were the case, would not an eternity which has no limits at all, claim the whole term to be spent in preparation for its endless ages? Do I then know the finish of my days? May it not arrive to-morrow? Is then the task of making myself ready for death only the business of a few hours or a few minutes? Ought not a thorough knowledge of myself, anguish for my sins, and a complete change of heart and disposition, to be accomplished before I make the decisive entrance into eternity? And how much meditation, what an effort of strength, and what industry are needful for this purpose? How necessary is it then, that I should take measures sufficiently early to provide for the most important occupation of my existence?

What is the period which I have yet to live? It may be years and months. But even these will rapidly vanish, and still more increase my guilt, if I direct them not to the salvation of my soul. Ere I think of it, my end will be here, and I shall perceive with sorrow, regret, and astonishment, that all my resolutions have remained unfulfilled.

What is the period which I have yet to live? I know it not; and this very ignorance ought to render me watchful and careful in the use which I make of my time. I should always so live as if every day were the last of my existence. I should always do that which at the close of my days I shall wish that I had done and performed. I ought not to approach the term of my departure heedlessly, but with mature reflection. I ought often to ask myself, "Will these pleasures, these lusts, these dignities be to me in dying that which I now deem them? Shall I be able then to recollect with satisfaction the conduct which I now pursue, when on my beath-bed I call my actions to their last inspection?" This species of examination, were it perseveringly continued and earnestly under-

taken, might at least have the advantageous result, that I should become circumspect in my choice of earthly things.

Soul, make this day the first of so wholesome a mode of thinking! I am again to-day one day older; or, what is equivalent, I am so much nearer to my grave. My life may be prolonged to the furthest stretch of human duration, yet even though I should then reckon it by minutes it would appear but a very short space if compared with immortality. On this brief, transient, dubious period, however, my everlasting happiness or misery depends. How foolish should I be were I in the enjoyment of the world to lose sight of this destiny? What! I, a rational creature, one of the redeemed of Christ, an inhabitant for heaven; ought I to live like the brutes whose whole life and happiness terminate with their animal being? Ought I to live so many days and yet be unable to say of one of them, in the essential acceptation of the phrase: "This day I have lived?" Ought I to allow myself to be overtaken in the midst of my carelessness by that eternity which is so terrible? No, be this determination fixed: the hours which are appointed to me I will live to the honour of God.

MAY 24.

The natural Helplessness of Man.

On whichever side I regard my earthly destiny, the melancholy imbecility of my condition, always necessitous of aid, and the instability of all terrestrial good, are universally evident and sensible to me; and the conviction of the beneficence of the belief in a wise and holy governance of the world forces itself upon me with equal persuasion. Do I consider the state in which I entered upon this earth, there is scarcely so helpless a creature in the whole creation as I am. And though I have arrived to great strength, and to the maturity of my powers, still I am unable to provide for my own well-being. Externally I am exposed to such numberless obstacles, and inwardly to so many disquietudes; —to such tempestuous storms of the elements, and to such

furiousness of the unbridled passions of men, that all human precaution is too feeble to guard against them, and all force too weak to ward them off. So many temptations and wiles are set for me, that my cunning is as little able to discover them as my ability is to frustrate them. I may fall into so many unexpected dangers which no mortal prudence could have foreseen; I am subject to so many infirmities and diseases; to so much violence, deceit, and falsehood, on the part of others; that were the protection of the divine providence to be withdrawn, I should remain a comfortless wretch, who must of necessity sink under the weight of sin, misery, and grief.

In addition to all these chances to which my weakness is a prey, want and need are seen to augment the sum of my afflictions. I feel within myself appetites and inclinations that will be satisfied; or, if they are not appeased, lamentably torment and distract me. If under these circumstances I had no support except my own natural reason, how little would my necessities be supplied, or my wishes accomplished! Unnoticed accidents, unanticipated events, might thwart my best plans and enfeeble all the means from the instrumentality of which I promised myself the happiest effects. And it would be of no avail that I should rise early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of care, if the Lord blessed not my efforts, and prospered not the labours of my enterprise.

This day will confirm all these considerations. I shall in manifold ways experience my weakness, my wants, and my wretchedness. However, much as these contemplations dispirit me, I am also as effectually tranquillized when I think of this truth, that I stand under the defence of the Almighty Ruler of the world, who is also my Father and my Benefactor. Under his care I can fearlessly encounter any fate that may hang over me. To his dominion I resign, with the fullest reliance, the ordering of all my concerns. From my God, who hath in Jesus so dearly loved me, I dare to expect everything that is conducive to my advantage. All my anxieties are put to silence by the consolatory idea: "If God is for me, who can be against me? He did not spare even his own Son, but gave him up for me. How should he not then with him bestow upon me all besides?"

MAY 25.

Our worldly Interests ceases with Death.

An hour will at one time or other come which will rob me of all that is now most valuable to my heart, and occupies my whole soul. My life, my health, my fortune, and my pleasures, all that I love in the world can for me last no longer than till the day of my death. And when this day arrives, all the schemes which I had purposed to execute are lost, and I must leave behind me whatever on earth I accounted for gain. How gloomy and discouraging is this idea for those whose minds are totally devoted to this lower sphere and to its joys! How difficult will it then too be for me to quit this world and its gratifications, to separate myself from my friends and my beloved, and depart to the unknown country! How severe a conflict will it cost my heart to burst the chains which bind me to my sublunary state, and not to shrink with horror at the grave, whither I shall take with me nothing of all my glory, save a shroud and a covering that will defend me not even from the worms! How poor does this hour of death make me! Poorer than I was at the day of my birth. Till the hour of my death men honour me; they listen to my advice; they obey my commands. Till then I retain the possession and enjoyment of the goods which my industry has amassed. Death deprives me of all right and property, and I can neither say of my coffin nor my tomb that they remain mine; to the former the worms, and to the latter the bones of my brethren lay claim.

How frightful appears the hour of death when I yield only to my carnal feelings, and behold it with a worldly mind! But how widely different does it seem when I regard it in the light of Christianity—then do I see, in the loss of life, the richest and the noblest profit; then do I find, even in this terrifying change, a fountain-spring of joyfulness and hope. Endue me with wisdom, O God; and to this end instruct me in Jesus, so that, strengthened through faith, of which he is the author and the finisher, I may frequently ponder upon death. As often as the hour strikes, let me reflect within myself, that another step towards eternity is

completed! And when it shall at length happen that all my hours have tolled, let me die in hope and peace. Can I indeed, for this day, obtain any higher blessing than the hearing of such a prayer? Can I live more tranquilly or more happily than through the accomplishment of this desire? But thou wilt hear me; I confide in thy grace through Christ Jesus.

MAY 26.

Anticipation of the Future rendered joyful by an approving Retrospect of the Past.

When, on awakening from sweet and refreshing sleep, I can review the past day with tranquillity and joy; when my conscience testifies to me that I have walked before the Lord; O! how cheerfully and with what consolation do I look forward into futurity! It is true I have never yet lived a day in which I did not, in some manner, sin against my Maker; yet with what happy confidence dare I still lift up my eyes to my God, who is likewise my benignant Father, and remaineth so notwithstanding that I am so often unworthy of his goodness! But this thought shall never lead me into indolence in the office of amendment; never render me careless and secure—for God, who sees into the inmost recesses of my breast, grants me his grace only when he discovers in my heart the love of virtue, and an ardent desire to purify itself. Though so long as I live I should never cease to fall and stumble, yet with an upright endeavour to become better, I would still dare to hope, with confidence, that God will be gracious to me. For I am a Christian, and have participation in the redemption which Jesus has established me also has he clearly purchased with his blood; and he has likewise, through his pains and his death, become my Intercessor and Propitiator. How should I do otherwise than, with infantine security, draw near to God, who is so merciful and long-suffering; who desireth not to go into judgment with his children; who willingly forgives the penitent; and who gladdens the sinner through his blessings,

and allures him to himself? O! may, therefore, every fresh, unmerited favour of God be made to inspire me with fervent gratitude and redoubled zeal in holiness; and strengthen me in my efforts to become evermore deserving of the grace of the Most Excellent! How will my heart be then enriched in contentment and true joy, in trust in God, and in love towards men; and how tranquilly shall I hereafter, when my last hour sounds, be enabled to yield back my spirit to the disposal of its Author!

MAY 27

Necessity of being wholly devoted to God.

With earnestness and reverence will I call to mind that I have no right to sport wantonly, and according to the caprice of my own fancy, with my allotted period of life, and with my powers and faculties, and that I ought to regard them only as confided pledges, of the employment of which I must one day render an account. How often have I already acknowledged this sacred fact; how often declared to God that I would devote myself, with my whole soul and my whole body, to his glory; and how often have I been already false to this vow! For is it not falsehood and violation of my covenant to live indeed sometimes faithfully and uprightly, but afterwards again to abandon myself to slothfulness and frivolity of mind; to humble myself truly before God in days of care and trial, but then, when the care is surmounted, and the star of prosperity again brightens, to return to my former pride and vanity? Is it not treachery towards God and my conscience, if I fulfil indeed those duties which cost my heart no conquest, but, on the contrary, reject all those against which my sensuality rises in rebellion, and which I can only accomplish through the steadfast combat of my passions? Can I boast of my devotion and my piety so long as I still totter betwixt will and practice, so long as I am still irresolute and fickle?—No; I belong not yet to the devout, who love God with all their heart and with all their strength. But thou knowest, my Lord and my God, that the promise

which I solemnly renew to thee this morning, the irrevocable promise to be, from this day forward, entirely thy property, and thy faithful, obedient child, through adoption in Christ, comes from the very bottom of my heart; and thou it is who wilt grant to me the power to keep it; thou guidest me according to thy counsel; thou sendest me excitement and encouragement to execute that which I have earnestly determined.

MAY 28.

Gratitude to the Creator.

Even though thy blessings, merciful God, were not endless, though their duration were limited only to a certain period, still should I be under the strongest obligation to extol thy goodness. Though the future should afford to me no occasion for praise, yet would the past present to me innumerable reasons for thy glorification. However far I travel back into my life, I everywhere find expressive memorials of thy beneficent grace. In vain do I strive to enumerate thy favours or to calculate their immensity. For should I even strive to sum up the benefactions of one single day, how stupendous would appear the amount of thy mercies! And what shall I say of the benefactions of a year—of the benefactions of many years in succession? Where remain the blessings of my childhood, and the gifts of my riper age? Where are classed the blessings of sleep, and those secret testimonies of thy benevolence, which I myself do not observe? Where stand the blessings of my redemption? Ah! Lord, incalculable, unmeasurable, incomprehensible, infinite is thy goodness! It is no man's work to count thy benefits; it is no finite being's occupation to pry into the multitude of thy wonders: the very angels rest mute at the estimate; the very heavens are astonished at thy kindness. Forgive, then, my feebleness if I also, at the contemplation of thy munificence, can do nothing further than be transported, ravished, and amazed.

This amazement, this transport, ought to render themselves manifest in every portion of my life, and make me prompt in

the performance of those duties which thy goodness demands from me. Am I unable to count the instances of thy benignity? then will I the more eagerly endeavour to search them out, to muse upon them, and to publish them to others. Am I incapable of appreciating the greatness of thy mercy? Then will I take so much the stricter pains to acknowledge my own unworthiness, my own nothingness, and my own imbecility. Is it not in my power to praise thee with words? Then will I so much the more assiduously seize every opportunity to do thee homage by my actions. Is it not possible, that I should have in this world the happiness fully to comprehend thy pitying love? Then will I so much the more ardently long after heaven, where thy goodness will be yet more largely displayed to me, and my spirit better adapted to laud thy compassion according to its worthiness. Am I unable to praise thee during my life? Then will I exalt thee in my death, and go out of the world with the song of thanksgiving: "Lord, what mighty things hast thou done for me! How hast thou magnified thy goodness to me!" And when, at length, I shall be caught up into thy glory, then shall I perfectly perceive how much thou hast performed for me. My soul will then extol thee, and my whole spirit rejoice in thee, O God, my Saviour!

MAY 29.

The Christian's Destiny and Vocation.

I WILL this morning again earnestly reflect that it is my calling and my destination to live piously; and that I trifle with my eternal salvation, when, for a single day, I lose sight of this appointment. I will examine myself whether through conscientiousness, through amendment of heart, and through meditation on my duty, I have advanced any nearer to my grand vocation; I will pray God, that he be pleased to grant me his Holy Spirit, that I may succeed in healing the feebleness of my heart, and change it into strength; I will often and with ardour regard the exalted pattern of my Redeemer, that it may enliven my zeal and confirm my mind. O! that I might even to-day let no impulse of my conscience arise

unobserved, and no opportunity of doing good pass away unemployed! How often already have I drawn upon myself bitter repentance, because I hardened myself against my conscience, because I heeded not its admonitions, and marked not its remembrances; and how wretched should I be were it, at length, totally to cease to speak! O! this will I vow to thee, my God, that on the present day I will be more attentive to the condition of my heart, and watch with care over myself, that no sinful lust may enter in and disturb its purity and its tranquillity. I will strive to escape every temptation that it may be dangerous for me to encounter; and deny myself even lawful pleasures, that I may acquire the habit of self-control. The example of the light-minded shall not inveigle me into foolishness; I will always keep in memory that the neglecters of God can enjoy no peace; and that no advantage and no prosperity of the earth can afford indemnification for the loss of a good conscience; no remorse erase committed sins, or call back misspent days. Yet all this may I accomplish through thee, my God, who art potent in them that are weak; and to this end I offer up to thee my supplication.

MAY 30.

Address to God under his various Attributes.

O God, most worthy of adoration, I now solemnly address thee, and vividly feel how great my reverence, how deep my humility, how ardent my devotion ought to be, when I lift up my voice to thee in supplication. I pray to thee, the omnipresent Deity, before whom all my thoughts and views lie exposed and known, and who canst not be deluded by any representation or appearance. I address my supplications to thee, thou omnipresent God, in whose hands all my destinies are placed, and who art able to punish my false and flattering heart, and to recompense my integrity. I pray to thee—I pray to a holy and righteous God, who detests all wickedness, and to whom an iniquitous heart is an abomination. Woe to my soul if I should designedly transgress

against him! To me there would then remain no sacrifice, no forgiveness of offences, but a frightful expectancy of judgment and of the consuming fire, which is doomed to destroy the irreligious. I pray to a gracious and compassionate God, who opens the bosom of his mercy to all believing worshippers, and is most willing to show them his favour when they do not obstinately contemn his blessing. I pray to the infinitely Divine Majesty, whom even the angels venerate with lowliest prostration. Should I approach the footstool of his glory with less awe, I, who am so far below the angels, and who, on account of my imperfections, am bound by duty to so much more profound obeisance? I pray to the God of truth, who is an enemy to all falsehood and guile. How, then, could I give ear to the demon of lies, and rob my God of the honour due to him? I pray to the love-abounding Redeemer, who would save me, and for his merit's sake make me a participator in every blessing.

While I reflect on this, my whole heart is penetrated with sacred dread and adoration; but that holy reverence and submission with which, in ancient time, Abraham made petition to Jehovah, must also imbue my mind. It must not only be to me a duty, but my most agreeable occupation often to converse with God. But thou, my Father and my Lord, thou the most highly elevated and supreme, who rulest from eternity to eternity, look down with compassion on thy servant desirous to acknowledge thee, his Creator and his God, and to present to thee the tribute of grateful worship. Grant me the spirit of prayer, that my aspirations may meet with thy approval. Let the idea of thy sovereignty sway my entire soul, and awaken me to the saving fear of thy hallowed name. With what joy does the thought fill me, that thou hearest me and art propitious to me; that thou hast regard to the sighs of thy children, and seest their tears; and that they entreat thee not in vain! O! how many sighs, how many wishes, how many vows, will this day be poured forth to thee? Listen especially to the forsaken and the needy, and help them with thy mighty arm. Vouchsafe to me, this day, all that my real happiness requires and lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.

MAY 31.

Reflections on the elapsed Month.

What more imperative duty can I this morning undertake than to reckon with sincerity of mind the hours which I have lived in the speedily elapsed month? The longer I delay this task the more laborious will be the calculation of my life. I will set about it this day. I will with candour and earnestness review my past days, consider my past actions, and steadfastly explore their value. O! how much shall I find to amend, to rectify, to obliterate, and to recall! Have I devoted this time to the service of God, or to the service of the world? Have I collected during this period a treasury of good works, or have I defiled it with vices? Have I met my neighbour with love and fidelity, or have I exercised towards him severity and unrighteousness? Have I always truly fulfilled the vow of self-improvement which I every morning presented to God, or have I often allowed myself to be carried away headlong by my weakness, even into a worse state than before? These are the questions which I must put to myself, and to which I must ingenuously reply, if I would reflect with profit on my days that are now no more.

But the blessings, likewise, which I have received from God in the course of this short and fleeting space, shall form the subject of my grateful contemplation and my praise. Where was there a day void of those evidences of grace, of that love, of that patience, of that protection, which are so absolutely necessary for me in the progress of my life? When was there an hour in which I had not to count as many benefactions as moments? Finally, I will yet cast a glance at my future days, or rather in idea weigh their uncertainty. I will reflect how doubtful it is, whether either the close of this month or the beginning of the next shall belong to my living days. I will be a miser with my time, and consider every hour of devotion, every opportunity of serving God, as a precious gift, for the employment of which I owe an account to my Creator. I will be zealously heedful to fit myself for heaven, to gather riches for eternity, and

to keep my conscience unspotted till the day of the coming of Jesus.

Ah! my God and Lord, teach me this wisdom, and make my heart fast therein. To-day, since my past and future life are equally separated, to-day will I meditate only on those things which may sanctify the time that I have already lived, and render happy the portion that may still remain before me, but form no doubtful plans for distant periods. The duties which I neglected in the days that are spent, will I, with so much the more ardent activity, endeavour to bring again into practice, in order that I may look forward to the future with joyous confidence.

JUNE 1.

The Assurance of God's Divine Providence dispels Cares, and fortifies against Temptation.

I ADVANCE, with filial confidence, towards the uncertain future which this day, the first of a new month, opens to me, and into which it also bears me. It is true, I know not whether days of happiness or days of calamity await me; but I know that in the volume of his register God has inscribed all my days that shall yet be; I know that the eternal wisdom ordains my destinies, and that under such a government, even the sufferings I endure in this life will promote my everlasting welfare. Supported by my belief in a Divine providence, I proceed without fear or anxiety, in the way which my duty and my profession require me to go. Why should I be downcast, since God knows me and takes charge of me; since the All-benevolent, even before I petition him for it, perceives and is aware of the object of my need? Therefore, will I admit no other care in my soul, than how I may render myself more worthy of the blessings of my Maker; no other sorrow than grief for the weakness and foolishness of my heart; no other hope than the trust that God will be gracious to me, and that his omnipotence will protect me where I cannot protect myself. I will preserve my heart with all heedfulness, for thence are the issues

of life. If my virtue would shrink under temptations, then let the thought exalt me, that I walk beneath the eyes of God, and that his Spirit sustains me if I supplicate it from him. At the close of every day this must be the soothing reflection which adds repose to my sleep, that I am able to say, "I am now nearer to God than I was yesterday."

But if I would arrive at this happiness, then no longer dares my heart to listen to the world and its lusts, then must I resolve to bend my ambition and my covetings to the things above. But how can this be difficult to me, since every day evinces to me the vanity and the transitoriness of earthly goods; since the delights of the world afford to my bosom so little true satisfaction; since, as a disciple of Jesus, I know my higher appointment and the felicity which I may securely expect, if I devote all my powers and my lifetime to my duty and vocation. No; no longer shall the idle pleasures of the world befool me; I will strive after purer joys; I will not heap up earthly hoards, but collect celestial riches. Vouchsafe to me, for this purpose, thy support, my Father who art in heaven; and grant that I may employ, to my perpetual salvation, not only this new day with which thou giftest me, but each which thou mayest from this time bestow upon me.

JUNE 2.

Contemplation of Nature.

In what expressive language do the beauties and the riches of nature excite me to the wondering admiration and to the praise of my Creator! how loudly does this glorious nature proclaim to me that God is good to all, and that he has compassion on each of his works! For how plenteously has he furnished her with everything that can rejoice, gratify, or exalt his creature man! And how pure, how holy, are the delights which nature presents to us? While the possession of every other pleasure is so easily saddened and embittered, and requires so much preparation, and so much expense of time and labour, I feel myself filled with the most pure de-

light, while enjoying the beauties of nature, who offers herself to me on all sides without my slightest exertion. And these joys can never be snatched from me, never disturbed, provided that my heart be otherwise unsullied and tranquil, and keep itself true to its better feelings. How often already have the charms of nature comforted and enlivened me, when sorrow weighed me down! how often have they revived my hope and my confidence when I despondingly feared that I was forsaken of God! O! never will I, therefore, enter the stately temple of nature, without remembering, with grateful affection, its celestial Builder, and without consecrating to my Maker my heart and my life. For how can I deny my grateful adoration to the wise and beneficent Deity, who has, even for me, arrayed nature in this dazzling beauty, and provided her with these inexhaustible treasures; who clothes the grass and the flowers also, that I may enjoy them; who brings forth bread out of the earth; who replenishes the land with fruits which he forms, and which the hills water from above, that I may be satisfied with fulness of pleasure! How can I ever cease to trust in the All-bounteous, who showeth his compassion even to me; embraces the worm with his pity; who feeds the gay tenants of air; who defends the tenderest blossom in the storm; who even on the frightful wings of the terrible tempest sends blsssings and benefits to his children! Is the earth full of his goodness? So likewise let my heart be filled with thankfulness and confidence. Do the heavens recount to me the glory of God? How should my lips pass over in silence the glory and the greatness of the Governor of the universe? Praise then the Lord, O my soul, and forget not the abundance of his mercies towards thee.

JUNE 3.

Angels the Ministers of God's Goodness.

How great are the prerogatives which God has conferred upon my soul! how great in particular the privilege of being enabled to know its Creator, to admire and to praise him, to

perceive its own exalted destiny, and to strive to fulfil it! On each new morning which God's goodness vouchsafes to me, and in every hour which is devoted to his adoration, I feel with thankfulness and joy that I have been deemed worthy of the high privilege of being able to elevate myself with my thoughts and feelings to the Lord, strengthened through unsuspicious confidence in his goodness and wisdom, and encouraged through reverence and love towards him, both in the inclination and the practice of good works. Every new morning I rejoice afresh in the faith, that my spirit is intended for a more exalted life, and capable of infinite perfection, and that I have here no permanent place of rest. As often as I feel the weakness and the frailty of my body, and think of the visible and invisible dangers to which my life is every moment exposed, I congratulate myself on the Almighty protection under which I am placed, and the skilful benevolence which rules my fate. And every returning dawn confirms me in my consoling belief in the mercy and grace of the Divine Being, who sends his angels, that they may defend my existence, and drive from me perils which my eye beholds not and my heart does not imagine. Yes, he sends his angels; for how otherwise should I have escaped all those fatalities which threatened my days of childhood, and from which neither the truest love nor the most affectionate care would have sufficed to guard me? He sends his angels; for how often was my life so wonderfully saved, when I seemed already to be lost beyond rescue? As they stood formerly at my cradle, and guarded and watched me, so now stand they beside my bed, while I am buried in quiet and gentle sleep, and know nothing of myself; they are the heralds which God dispatches to me, when his wisdom and his kindness have resolved to bless me; they accompany me unseen in my paths, and are my guides, when I am determined in mind to assimilate myself to them, and cheerfully, like them, to do the behests of my Divine Master. And this determination I will to-day renew: I present it to thee, my Lord and my God, as a matinal offering with which thou wilt be well pleased. O! grant me thy grace, that I may this day and each succeeding one accomplish it with zeal and fidelity; that I may hasten full of charity to the aid of my fellow-mortals; that I may be their angel in peril

and sorrow, their comforter and friend, and a vessel of thy goodness. Then shall I be certain of thy blessing and thy grace; then shall I dare to proceed, full of trust and consolation, to the boundary of my earthly race, and full of confidence that thou wilt admit me into the happy assembly of the celestial spirits, whom thou hast collected round thy throne, and who behold thee as thou art.

JUNE 4.

The Necessity and Efficacy of Prayer.

I SHOULD lose my sweetest comfort and my best encouragement in virtue, were I to cease to lift up my heart in reverential prayer to God; for how often have I experienced the blissful, the divine influence of prayer on my heart; how often has it armed me with new strength for the performance of righteousness; how often stilled my cares and tempered my sorrow. As Peter was released from his chains when he fervently prayed, so has prayer loosened me from the bonds of my trouble. As the earth was refreshed with rain at the pious supplications of Elias, so has the All-good, in my days of need, quickened and comforted me at my petition, through the instances of his love. As Jesus himself, when he offered up prayer with a loud cry and with tears, was relieved from his anguish, so has God listened to me and snatched me away from my tribulation. Why should I indeed doubt, that my prayer may not have the same efficacy as the prayer of so many holy men of former ages? Is not God unalterable in his omnipotence and goodness? Is not his mercy endless? Why should he begin with me to be void of affection and pitiless?—with me who am named after the name of his Son, and who am pleaded for by his intercession, and redeemed by his death? No; thy goodness, O Lord, endures for everlasting. I shall be even so listened to by thee, as all thy children have been, if I only pray to thee with a sanctified soul.

In this persuasion I now approach thee, O gracious God, and in the morning of this day pour out before thee my in-

most longings. But what is it that I desire from thee? Do I seek for the power to do good, and to walk in thy ways? O! how willingly, how abundantly wilt thou impart it to me. Or, do I, perhaps, only covet temporal and perishable advantages? O! that I might not struggle so eagerly after the vanities of this earth; but rather after the felicities of heaven! Would that I might submit all my wishes to the will of thy wise providence, and as it becomes a Christian, entertain higher and more holy desires! O God, so rule yet my heart through thy Spirit, that guided and endowed with such sentiments it may worthily pray to thee. Grant to me that wise, that pious heart by which thou didst distinguish Solomon. If the voice of God should come to me saying: "Ask what thou wilt, it shall be granted;" if I also had my fate at my free choice and in my hands; even then let me select as wisely as that monarch did, and speak to thee thus: "Lord, Lord, grant to thy servant an understanding heart, that he may know good from evil." And this blessing, only this blessing is it, for which I cry to thee this morning. Give me a pious and an understanding heart. With the possession of this good, every other will fall to my lot. Thou wilt give me what my heart wishes, if it be a pious, humble, contented heart. And though I should be deprived of wealth, honour, and other temporal advantages, wisdom and virtue will be to me instead of all, and in the enjoyment of thy grace and thy approbation, I shall have nothing besides to desire.

JUNE 5.

Comparison of our own Condition with that of others.

I SHOULD be much more contented and happy if I were less extravagant in my wishes, and ceased to regard with envy and rivalry the condition of my more prosperous brethren. Too frequently am I in the habit of forming comparisons between myself and others, which equally insult the wise providence of God, and disturb my own peace of mind. "Why am I not," often say to myself, "as rich, as

honoured, as fortunate, as satisfied in all my wants, as that man is who has as little merit as myself?" How easily do I forget, amid these comparisons, the benefits and advantages which God has granted to me, and the debt of gratitude with which I am loaded, and which is due to him from me, for them! I do not observe with what manifold blessings He has favoured me. I observe not that combination of grace, love, and happiness, which I should discover on an attentive view of my situation. I see not those arrangements which God has made to furnish me with everything that I require for a pious life, and even with more. I perceive not the difference which exists between myself and so many thousands who are far from passing their days so tranquilly, and in such abundance as I do. I live in a station in which I enjoy freedom. How many of my fellow-creatures are shut up within impenetrable walls, are compelled to breathe an empoisoned air, to lie on the hard floor, and to languish in vain after the rays of the sun! I rested softly during the past night, and in health, now inhale the fresh breezes of the morn:—how many thousands of my mortal kindred watched out sombre hours amid agony and moans, and have commenced the present day with affliction and sickness! I possess as much as is needful for my bodily sustenance:—how many millions, on the contrary, are constrained to weep in vain for bread and nourishment! I enjoy a sound constitution:—O! how many are stretched on beds of disease, and feel on every new movement new pains!—and dare I still be discontented at my own lot? Can I envy others on account of their good fortune, while yet so many more have cause to envy me on account of my advantages! Can I murmur at the destiny which God has appointed to me, when it unquestionably is the best possible for my powers and qualifications?

O! how deeply should I plunge myself in sin, were I to indulge in such a disposition! No, never shall the idea quit my heart, that the station which thou hast ordained to me, my God, is for me the most beneficial. And since a satisfied, contented heart, is the chief good of life, let me arrive at this felicity, and no further wrong thee through fretfulness and complaints. Remind me continually of my own unworthiness which by no means deserves so many manifestations of

kindness as thou hast displayed to me, during my life. Let this feeling excite me to praise thee for every benefit, however small it may appear, and strengthen me in my reliance on thee. And how is it possible that I should mistrust thy gracious governance, when I have daily new and augmented proofs of thy wisdom and benignity? No, it must remain for ever the principle and groundwork of all my thoughts and actions, to found my hopes on thee, to fear thee, and to love thee. With these sentiments, I shall always be impressed with the conviction of the happiness of being placed under thy sway. Thy fear will preserve me from iniquity, and thy love comfort me under all circumstances. And with such sentiments I shall be able to await all thy decrees with resignation, and full of consolation also even to meet death. For how can I expect anything evil in death, from a God who has done to me nothing but good in my life?

JUNE 6.

The Contemplation of God's boundless Love.

This morning is a period of reflection. The less I am entangled in the distractions of the senses, the more capable am I of employing myself in holy meditation. And what is more worthy of my musings than the unspeakable love of my God, of which he has this morning presented to me new testimonies? But how can I reflect upon the love of God without being astonished at its immensity, and without resolving to love him everlastingly in requital? How worthy of wonder is the love of a God whose delight it is to bless his creatures and rejoice them; and who created the human race only that they might be exalted to the highest pinnacle of felicity, and feel reciprocal fondness for him? But does my heart bear witness to me, that I love him with ardent gratitude and sincere reliance; that I acknowledge his benefits; that I deem myself happy, when through devotion and piety I can attain to a closer connexion with my heavenly Father?

With shame and penitence I must confess, thou God of love, that I am also among those who think perversely and

act ignobly. I love thee neither so vehemently, nor with so much warmth, nor in such singleness of heart, as I ought to do in return for thy infinite tenderness towards me. I am not yet in that blessed situation that I can say, "Lord, if I have only thee, I ask nothing from heaven or earth." Ah! the love of temporal things has still far too much dominion over my heart. This blinds and governs me, this drags me along in its torrent, this causes me as often to forget thy love as my own duty. O! might the spectacle of nature, thy production, which is so glorious and inexhaustible—might the contemplation of the benefits through which thou hast so graciously prospered my life, warm and elevate my heart to fervent attachment towards thee! Yes, if I desire longer to live, it is that I may dedicate my life to thy love, that I may employ thy favours to thy glorification, and become deserving of thy blessing.

I must seek my greatness and my felicity, in loving thee and in being beloved by thee. I must set my heart on that life where both objects will receive at length their complete accomplishment; where I shall eternally love thee, and where thou wilt eternally love me.

Now, even to-day, let me labour to this end; this let me wish; this let me obtain. May thy love direct me in the season of prosperity; may it satisfy me in the hour of pleasure; may it console me in the time of misfortune; may it transport me in death, and attend me into eternity! O! how shall I there love thee, infinite Being, so worthy of all love and adoration!

JUNE 7.

Longing after Tranquillity and Rest.

As a traveller tormented by the dust and the heat, threatened by dangers, and harassed by privations, longs after his home and repose, so longs man on his earthly journey after rest, and yet finds it not. On all sides the evils and imperfections of life disturb and disquiet him; on all sides perils, anxieties, and afflictions, press upon his soul! lingering sufferings fre-

quently follow short-lived joys, and bitter disappointment eager desire; the most affectionate zeal for a brother's welfare is frequently rewarded by ingratitude and vexation. And if the outward world assails not his peace, then it is even his own weak, faint heart that renders him unhappy and wretched. How often, with sighs, have I myself experienced this! how often have I forgotten in my despondency, in my discontentment, in my immoderate anxiety about the future, that it is sadness enough for us that every day has its own distress! Be it, then, to-day determined before God that I will not again be unmindful of this truth, and that I will not distract myself with care concerning the morrow. Let me determine to suffer like a man and a Christian, to enjoy prudently and thankfully, and commend all my ways to the Lord. Truly I dare not hope that the remainder of my life in this world will be free from solicitude, my worldly happiness undisturbed, my heart ever gay and cheerful in hope; but this feeble, pusillanimous heart will remain tranquil and comforted if it be mindful of its heavenly calling, if it believe in the promise of its Redeemer, and consider that the troubles of this passing existence are of no account when balanced with the glory that shall hereafter be displayed to the true worshippers of God. One day certainly—perhaps soon, the longing of my heart after ease and felicity will be gratified in a new and better world: soon will the toilsome and thorn-strewed path which leads to heaven be ended; for even the days of woe speedily pass over, and between joy and grief we come, ere we are aware, to the goal. And this goal is indeed well worthy of the struggle and effort with which we must urge towards it, and that we should strive indefatigably and assiduously to obtain it. O! do thou thyself direct my steps to this great and glorious goal, my Lord and my God! be near me with thy Spirit when, disconsolate, I despair of myself. If the world has only calamities and miseries for me, let me see thy heaven opened, that I may endure courageously, and not become weary till thou shalt call me away from my mortal day's labour, which of a truth is a burdensome and grievous, but yet a blessed, day's labour—a sowing for the everlasting harvest in the land of promise. O! how can I be dismayed, since thou protectest me, so long as I walk in thy ways! How can I become weary, since thou daily strengthenest me, and art powerful

in my weakness, if I only pray to thee with fervour, and put my trust in thee! No, no trouble, no difficulty, no hardship, no pain, and no time shall remove me, my Father, to a distance from thee: if I live, I live to the Lord; if I die, I die also to the Lord.

JUNE 8.

Reflections on the Omnipresence and Omniscience of the Almighty.

How encouraging, how consolatory, and how replete with admonition is for me the belief of the omniscience and the omnipresence of God; how does it refresh my soul when the obscurity and the casualty of the future, and the frailty of my own nature, inspire me with melancholy thoughts! Yes, it enlivens me with cheerful confidence, and excites me to the holiest zeal, to remember that the All-benevolent is near me, that the Just and the Righteous is the witness of my conduct, the observer of my secret works, the protector of my undertakings. I cease to complain that the unthankfulness of the world is my recompense; to sigh over the misconception of my sincerest intentions; to be discomforted because I am forced, notwithstanding all my genuine zeal for goodness, to contend against obstacles, when I consider that God knows my heart, that he is the rewarder of all that is good, that he sees into the things that are hidden. And how powerfully does this recollection console me, when a sorrow lies at my heart, which I cannot entrust to any one, or an anxiety which the Lord alone can alleviate, or when all earthly assistance fails me in times of danger. But how strongly also does the reflection of the universal presence of God warn me not to yield in privacy to the attractions of vice, not to sully my heart through wicked imaginations and profligate desires; not merely before men, but in the corner where no man's eye beholds me, to do good and faint not in my work; for God proves me and knows me, therefore will I give heed to this warning, that I may escape the temptation into which vanity and ambition seduce me, through eye-service to court

the multitude, to dishonour myself, and to offend against my conscience. I will then especially contemplate with awe the immediate presence of the Deity, when I have duties to fulfil, which cost my wavering heart self-denial and subjection; or when I am invited to do good in silent retirement, to exercise offices of mercy unnoticed and unapplauded by mankind, to endure wrongs in patient stillness, to labour under disease, or to undergo hardships, without the hope that my merit will ever be known or remunerated. If God is for me, be against me who may, still will I speak with pious confidence, and perform with joy and fidelity all the righteousness for which the Lord grants me opportunity and strength; for the Omnipresent, perfect in equity, is a spectator of my actions, and on this account I can be comforted and glad, even though the world repay me with hatred and envy. Whatever I have accomplished or endured on earth with love and integrity, and in full reliance on the Ruler of the world, will be recompensed unto me in heaven. Like my Saviour, I shall enter, at the appointed season, into the everlasting home where praise and honour and peace await all those who with patience and godly endeavours have directed their aim to eternal life.

JUNE 9.

Scrutiny into the secret Motives of our Conduct.

I WILL examine myself in this hour of morn, whether earnest reverence towards the Holy and the Righteous, who has written his law in my understanding, be influential in all my actions, in order that the All-wise Searcher of hearts may regard me with complacency. I will direct my research to discover what motive impelled me, when I have fulfilled my duty and remained true to the vocation which the Almighty has given me in charge; whether selfishness or vanity swayed me; whether the wish to be seen and commended by men reigned in my heart; whether flattery was dear to me; whether the fear of men, or the desire of pleasing men, allured me; or whether I had the courage to despise praise and censure, loss and gain, and to maintain my conscience

unwounded. For how little can I rejoice in my virtue, if I have not done good out of filial veneration for my Father whose courts are on high; if my bosom does not testify to me that his grace is more desirable to me than all mortal honour and renown. But I dare not boast that I have arrived at this elevation of virtue; that my heart is quite free from vanity and selfishness; that the noblest principles have always guided me, the purest views inspired me, and the best ends presented themselves to my mind, when I have acted uprightly for the common good, and like the friend of mankind, and not swerved from the path of my duty and my calling! O! could I even hide from myself that my heart is yet so weak, so foolish, and so inconstant, thou, Omniscient, knowest, yea, and explorest, this feeble heart; thou knowest what my thoughts are, thou understandest them without mistake. Therefore will I confess to myself and my conscience that I am still a servant of men, and not thy obedient child, my God and my Father; that much good which I have done with zeal and fidelity, I did only because it promised the satisfaction of my aspiring notions, or because I calculated on thy reward, thou Recompenser of integrity. With shame and penitence do I perceive the imperfection of my virtue; but with a sincere determination I avow to thee amendment, my God and my Lord: be gracious to me, and cast me not from thee! Reverence for thee shall never again depart from my heart, it shall lead me in all truth, and strengthen me for the strictest fulfilment of my duties; it shall be the support of my frail heart, and its protection, and its vigour, so long as I live.

JUNE 10.

Homage towards God excited by his Works.

Lord, my soul praises thee with ardent emotion! What is there more noble, what is there more blessed, than to exalt thee, thou source of happiness! I know that thou hast deigned to distinguish me by a great prerogative, in granting me the power to worship thee; and I feel how vast a happiness it is to dare to be a herald of thy wonders. Graciously

dost thou look down upon my thanksgiving celebration, and while I yet kneel on my knees before thee, thou already decreest to me a new blessing. How ravishing is it, Almighty, to contemplate thy miracles and proclaim thy praise! In intercourse with thee, eternity becomes a short day, and the minutes wing their flight in blessings. Lord, my boast, teach me worthily to extol thee, and unfold to me the wonders of thy goodness!

Jehovah, I see that thy greatness is boundless and beyond measure; I am sensible and acknowledge that my strains cannot rise to thy glory. Heaven and earth describe to me thy majesty; but I cannot utter it after them. This only I can say: "Great art thou, Jehovah, and incomprehensible is thy dominion!" How many marvellous works of thy omnipotence dost thou let me daily behold. Thou veilest the heavens with clouds, and thou preparest the rain which streams down in fertilizing showers. Thou commandest the hill to be fruitful, and the fields to assume their livery of bloom. Thy hands hold out their food to the animal creation. The eyes of all wait upon thee, thou givest them their nourishment in due season; thou replenishest with pleasure whatever lives. Thy voice runs through the globe, and thy infinite power follows it to the boundaries of the earth. From thee issue the darts of the lightning, and at thy nod the thunder rolls. Thou speakest; and it is done. Thou ordainest; and the decree stands indissoluble. Thou callest the morning; and it comes, and scatters joy and felicity around. Jehovah, thou art the bounteous Benefactor of all thy creatures.

Soul, that hast hitherto reflected on the extraordinary doings of thy God, what delight oughtest thou to receive from this sacred meditation! How greatly shouldst thou compassionate the insensibility of those who view the morning sun without feeling, and gaze without emotion on the theatre of nature. I esteem myself happy in my sensations. But would that they might not so soon vanish, so soon lose their influence! Would that I might, even amid the dissipations of the world, entertain a lively sense of my Creator, and prefer no pleasure, no happiness, to that gratification and to that felicity which I experience in the contemplation and the veneration of my God! The present day also affords me opportunities of tracing in the gardens and on

the plains the magnitude of the works of the Founder of the universe. O Lord, let me listen with reverence and rapture, when all creation shouts with a loud voice: "Great are the works of the Almighty!" Make every plant be to me a monitor of instruction. As they, in their whole structure, present an image of thy wise omnipotence; so let me, in all my life, and all my actions, evince that I am formed after the very image of thyself. To publish thy honour, to sing of thy might, and to magnify thy love; be this my choicest employment on earth, as it will be my most agreeable duty in eternity.

JUNE 11.

Search after Happiness.

WHERE in this life shall I find that happiness after which my heart so anxiously pants? On this question a great part of my contentment depends. But how difficult is it to be answered! how difficult is it also to be tranquil and happy! What station must I select, what measures must I adopt, to discover felicity! I look around me; and many thousands of my fellow-mortals put the same interrogations to themselves, without its solution having any especial influence on their repose. But I will, I must tranquillize myself; and I can do so, because I place my trust in the goodness of God, who will neither disquiet his creatures nor make them unhappy.

I apply to the great of the earth: but it is not their rank which promises me peace and happiness. The more highly they are elevated above others, the nearer they are to misery. The more they surpass other men in power and exaltation, the heavier are the cares which press upon them, the more urgent the dangers which menace them. Their whole grandeur is fatiguing and tormenting. Among all those who bow to them, there is not one true friend. Externally they are mirthful, inwardly they groan.—Shall I seek happiness in the closets of the sages and the learned? Their painfully attained knowledge, their straitly confined fame, the virulence and the persecution to which they are subject, the fre-

quently unavailing toil which they devote towards extending their acquirements, the state of comfortlessness into which, with all their wisdom, the thought of impending death frequently casts their minds; all this tells me that happiness dwells not with the worshippers of science.—But those who have their fill of riches, they are perhaps worthy to be envied, they are those who possess happiness and ease? But wherefore then do I see in these, thus esteemed happy, so many symptoms of vexation? Wherefore are they so tormented by avarice, wherefore are they so exposed to the malice of the slanderer, and wherefore are they filled with trouble and disquietude in death?—And how can I seek peace and happiness among you, ye wretched, who struggle with poverty and want? Your sighs and your tears convince me that felicity is not the companion of poverty.—Where am I then to find permanent quiet and real happiness?

Soul, repeat not anxiously this question. Tranquillity and happiness are near to thee—they are within thee, if thou art contented, satisfied, and thankful, and, if indeed, with Christian confidence, thou only placest thy hope in God, who rules all the vicissitudes of fortune. Hadst thou been contented and resigned in Him, long since wouldst thou have found that after which thou strivest; for, above all, reflect that this world is not the place where thou canst expect the complete gratification of thy wishes. Thou wilt, notwithstanding thy utmost integrity and thy sincerest disposition to be contented, ever experience cause to desire an amelioration of thy condition. And how glad mayst thou be that this change will infallibly follow when thou once arrivest at the visibleness of God. Strengthen thyself with this consideration under the uneasiness and the misery of this passing life, of which, even on the present day, a share is set aside for thee. Only perform this duty truly and with integrity; only avoid all violation of thy conscience; only look with faith to God, thy Father, and thy Redeemer: so wilt thou find peace for thy bosom. This grace will give thee a foretaste of that bliss which will hereafter crown thee in heaven.

JUNE 12.

The Thought of Death.

In our advanced years, and in the decline of our faculties, no thought more frequently or more imperiously usurps possession of the heart than the foreboding of death. I find even now on every side of me a thousand objects which remind me of mortality. I need not devote an instant's deep reflection to conclude that I am born to die. I need only consider the fate which one single hour brings with it to so many men. I need only regard myself and the flight of my years, the gradual decay of my powers, and frailty of my body, which increases day by day, and thus shall I be convinced of my mortality. Yet still so long as I continue in the land of mortals, little do I contemplate the final period of my existence. While I pass my days in health, in cheerfulness and abundance, all my ideas are confined to the earth, though at the same time in every moment of joy, death advances nearer towards me. Every thought which I entertain is, as it were, the sand which runs out of the hour-glass of my existence; and the time which I occupy to draw my breath takes away a portion of my life.

It is therefore as needful as it is beneficial to think often of death, and to render it the theme of our earnest meditation. But I must so think of death as to dispose myself to conquer its terrors, and to quit the world with composure. I must exercise the duties which the contemplation of death naturally renders more obvious. I must direct the remembrance of death to the correction of my life. I am mortal: —dare I then also be so foolish as to abandon myself to voluptuousness, which renders dissolution a martyrdom? I am mortal:—ought I then to collect uncertain riches, all of which I must leave behind me? I am mortal:—shall I be so bold as to nurture hatred against my foe, though it is probable that death may overtake me in the height of my inimical designs? I am mortal:—would it be indeed rational to strive as passionately after honour and renown, as if through them I could keep death at a distance, or render it more supportable? I am mortal:—can I venture then to weave

schemes for the far remote future, when a single instant may raise an indestructible barrier to their execution? I am mortal:—does it behove me to brave the Almighty, and despise the eternal? I am mortal:—ought I then to live as if I were to live for ever in the world; to enjoy as if my joys had no boundary; to proceed onward in sin as if I had not to appear before any tribunal? No: even because I am mortal, I will strive after the wealth which follows me into eternity; I will do good and become not fatigued with my efforts; I will employ the short period of my pilgrimage profitably; I will labour to become always more upright, al-always firmer in faith. I will neglect no opportunity of strengthening myself and others in virtue, since it is so doubtful whether any similar occasions may occur. I will always regard myself as a mortal, and desire only to procure those possessions, those sentiments, that wisdom through the attainment of which I may be able to await death without fear. God, let me as truly execute this purpose, as I have in all sincerity formed it!

JUNE 13.

Hardness of Heart Incompatible with the Christian Profession.

If I would bear the Christian name to my honour, and my felicity, I must not be hard, unfriendly, unjust, and ungracious towards my brethren: but must enliven and nourish in my breast the impulses of sympathy, pity, and benevolence. He that can be cruel, whether from temper, desire of revenge, or the itch of gain, deserves not the sun which gives him light, the life which he possesses, nor the appellation which he bears. When God made man, he created him according to his own image in this, that he infused love and kindness into his heart, and destined him for an instrument of his goodness. Our own form is even sufficient to convince us of this. Man is provided with no organs of barbarity, but, on the contrary, with those of affection and compassion. He has eyes to see the needy and the helpless,

and to distil tears at the spectacle. He has ears which are to hear the complaints, the sighs, and the wailings of the oppressed. He has hands to assist, and to afford help to others. He has a tongue to plead for the widow and the orphan, and to speak comfort to the wretched; he has a heart replenished with feeling, of which the emotions can be suppressed only by extreme violence. He is both created and redeemed to admire the love of God, and to practise love also himself. The whole life of Jesus, and especially his conduct in affliction, is not less an example for me than it is my atonement. This Divine friend of man employed all his great and godly powers in beneficence. How was his heart broken at the sight of the necessitous! How tenderly did he weep when he beheld the troubled in tears, or the sinner becoming miserable! How attentive was his ear to the cry and to the groans of those that suffered under want, and to those of the persecuted! How unwearied was his love in going up and down the earth to visit the diseased, and to dispense the blessings of his benevolence wherever such as required his aid were to be found! How busy were his hands to dry up the moistened cheek, to heal the sick, to awaken the dead, to embrace sinners! How did his lips flow with consolation! How eloquent was his tongue to direct the erring aright! His daily work was love and munificence.

O! that it might also be made my daily occupation to do good and to exercise love. How many opportunities shall I find for this purpose, if I have only the inclination to avail myself of them! No one must this day mourn over my sternness, no one pour out to God complaints against my insensibility, no one depart from me in sorrow. Rather let each of the poor and the wretched be rejoiced by my help; and each of these unfortunates bless me. And then, my God, may these blessings follow me, by thy grace throughout my whole life, and attend me to thy throne!

JUNE 14.

Faithfulness of the Lord towards those who truly worship Him.

My eternal and almighty Benefactor, if I possess thy grace, then do I possess all that I can either desire or hope for my welfare. Thou art my highest felicity. Thee have I chosen for my confidence and for my God. I consecrated myself to thy love on that happy day when I entered into a bond with thee, and became thy property. Then I renounced all friendship, all honour, and all lust of the world, and selected thy favour as my highest good, and swore to thee everlasting fidelity. This vow I have since often renewed: and should I now become a violator of my league, should I wantonly sport with thy grace, and cast away my reliance on thee? Far be it from me, O gracious God, that I should ever act so foolishly. How much experience have I already of the falsehood of the world! But thy favour, and trust in thy fatherly love have never deceived me. In all my miseries thou wast my refuge, my castle, my rescuer, my rock, on which I depended. When there was no one to release me, then has thy mighty hand set me free. Thou hast relieved me of my burden, and dispelled my fears. Thou hast brought light to me out of the darkness, and changed my night into day. When the world caused me nothing but disquietude and care, I have found silent and undisturbed repose in thee. Thou art my refuge, proved by long trial; and I resign to thee, with firm confidence, my future guidance. I cannot go astray when I am guided by infinite wisdom; I must be safe in the arms of infinite goodness; and to these therefore I devote myself with perfect security. I will receive everything thankfully that comes from thy hands; I will not take a single step except to follow thee. Thou hast an undeniable right to act with me according to thy will; and I prize it as my happiness to submit myself to thy pleasure and to resign myself to thy providence.

Lord, what is man that thou so thinkest of him? that thou, who art so blessed and independently happy, troublest thyself about the good of mortals, and takest as kind and as faithful

a concern in them as if they could disturb thy invariable bliss? Thou seemest to share our afflictions and to sympathize with us in our sorrows. No friend shows himself so zealous to help us as thy love renders thee; nor can means ever be wanting to thee to assist those who put their affiance in thee and in thy mercy. Thy providence finds a way through all opposition. No hindrance hems in or retards thy views. Thy counsel must be accomplished, thy work must succeed; for with thee nothing is impossible. Wherever I look, I behold proofs of thy power. The whole creation speaks for thee, and reproaches me with my unbelief.

Almighty God! pardon me my want of faith, while I confess that it is unanswerable. This life vouchsafed to me anew, which thou hast hitherto maintained against all assaults, is one of the strongest incitements to me to resign my life to thy charge. Now, Lord, I trust to thy goodness and cast myself upon thy promises. In these sentiments will I persevere, not this day only, but my whole life long, and even when all hope appears to have vanished.

JUNE 15.

Contemplations of Futurity.

To be able to think of the future is indeed an important privilege granted to the human race, but one which is either very badly employed or carelessly neglected by the greater part of mankind. It is equally as culpable to banish the future from our sight, as it is to grieve ourselves concerning it. If I act wisely, I shall use this power according to the intention of God. I owe it to myself to extend my concern relative to my own situation further than the present. And this duty is the more incumbent upon me, because my happiness and my unhappiness are not bounded to this immediate life, but I have also much to hope or to fear in eternity. Yet this hope and this fear in respect to the future depend, without doubt, on the direction of my present conduct. Such a regulation of conduct demands consideration and a constant contemplation of the future. I must always regard

my actions according to the influence which they may have on the time to come, and constantly ask myself: Will this or that object, which I now deem so agreeable and important, be equally pleasing and bear as high a value hereafter? Shall I judge of those points which I at present consider indifferent, when I shall have obtained more enlarged intellectual views? Will my errors also then appear to me as trivial and as insignificant, when I shall have arrived at a better knowledge of good and evil? Shall I then likewise account the loss of time as a little matter, when I shall stand on the borders of eternity?

Love for myself demands that I should think with earnestness on the future; but would it well accord with this love if I anticipated for my yet remaining days nothing but evil? By so doing I should greatly torment myself, and this torment would still in manifold instances be to no purpose, since the evil which disquiets me thus in apprehension frequently does not really ensue, or at least occurs under such circumstances as render it extremely light. I should too by so doing deny the wise and benignant Ruler of the world, who out of ill produces good. I should make my disbelief public and evident, and deserve all the harm which I prophesy to myself, and which I apprehend. But I should on the other hand behave with equal folly, if I promised myself from the future nothing but unalloyed comfort, and thus placed myself in a state incapable of struggling with unexpected difficulties

Futurity shall, therefore, be the subject of my meditation, but wisdom shall guide me in the task. Never shall the future disturb me, since I know that He who governs it wills for me that which is best. Yet it shall be my study to hold myself prepared for unpleasant events, that they may not overwhelm me by their suddenness. Especially shall it be my endeavour to fit myself, by faithfully honouring God, and by performing my duty uprightly, for that grand epoch which brings changeless felicity in its course. I will keep eternity always before my eyes, and through a rightly-ordered and assiduous consideration of it render it present to me. I will even now so think as I shall hereafter wish that I had thought. I will now even so act as I shall wish that I had acted, when I appear before God's throne. Thus shall I find in the future my sure happiness.

JUNE 16.

Adoration of God.

How wonderful, O God, are thy works! How unsearchable is thy wisdom! How worthy of astonishment is thy power! Thou governest in everlasting dominion: thou art mighty and adorable, and thy greatness is unutterable. I will speak of thy wonders and publish thy goodness.

Heaven and earth are thine. Thou hast spread out the firmament, and laid out the foundations of the solid globe; midnight and noon-day hast thou created, and all the mountains shout for joy in thy name. Thou hast an arm of vast strength, invincible is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Thy voice moves on the waters: thy voice resounds in the thunder: thy voice crumbles the rocks to pieces, and rends the oaks of a hundred years asunder. Thou art terrible! who then can stand before thee in thy wrath? Thou lookest at the earth, and it quakes: thou touchest the hills, and they smoke: thou speakest, the sea rages: thou commandest, the waves are still. If all the world rises in fury against thee, thou layest up honour; and if it girds itself against thee, thou art as a champion in the battle.

Thou art the God who performest wonders; thou hast manifested thy marvels among all people. All thy works shall give thanks to thee, O Lord, and thy elect shall praise thee, and boast of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power. For whatever the plains bring forth is in thy hand, and all the high places are thine. The sea is thine, for thou hast made it; and thy hands have prepared the dry land. Thou art wise and mighty. Who has ever prospered that set himself against thee? Thou dost great things, which are not to be searched into, and wonders without number. Thou art the holy and the righteous: no man can appease thy anger. Before thee all the proud must bow. Hell is discovered to thee, and the night is to thee as clear day. Thou countest the stars and callest them all by name. Thou art great and of great skill, and it is incomprehensible how thou rulest.

Thou hast done great things for me, for thou art mighty,

and holy is thy name. Thou art my Father and my Lord: it is thou who hast made me and fostered me. I thank thee, moreover, that I am wonderfully fashioned. My bones were not hidden from thee when I was first shaped. Thy eyes beheld me while I was yet formless, and all my days that were to be were noted in thy records. Thou hast clothed me with flesh and skin; with joints and veins hast thou knit me together. Life and enjoyment hast thou bestowed upon me, and thy observance maintains my breath. Thou art my confidence, Lord; my hope from my youth upwards. In thee have I trusted, even from my mother's womb, and on thee, so long as I exist, I will rely. O Lord my God, amazing are the deeds which thou displayest to me! I will proclaim them, and say of them: "Truly they are not to be counted." My mouth shall declare thy praise, and all flesh shall sanctify thy name for ever and eternally.

Amen! Praise and honour, thanksgiving and glory, be to thee, O God, from everlasting to everlasting! Praised be thy illustrious name, and let all lands be filled with thy glory.

JUNE 17.

Man's Efforts futile without the Divine Aid.

I THEN feel myself particularly conscious of the feebleness and impotence of my mortal nature, when, refreshed by sleep, I awake to a new day of life; and so far from this sensation disquieting or making me sad, it rather instigates me to the humblest confidence in God, my preserver and defender; and strengthens me in the reliance that I have in him, a friend and helper in every need, that he is strong in me, who am weak, and that he averts from me every danger, which belongs not to the plan of his wisdom. Yes, I see, O God, with emotion and gratitude, that the happiness which I have hitherto enjoyed is thy work, and not the effect of my own knowledge and understanding. Did the fruit of my labour depend solely on my own intellect, my own industry, and my own solicitude, in most instances, alas! all

my toil would be unavailing: for thou, the Disposer of all things, hast it in thy power to order and direct all circumstances; and on thy pleasure alone depends the fortunate result for which my heart longs, and which rewards and crowns my efforts. I watch to no purpose, if thou guardest me not; in vain do I take care, if thou preservest not my breath; to no use do I form schemes for my prosperity, if thou grantest not to them their completion. I attempt without success the purification and the amendment of my frail heart, if thou vouchsafest not to me thy Holy Spirit, and to the will addest the performance; if thou, through the ordainments of thy wisdom, turnest not away from me strong temptations, and placest me not in those relations with society, in which my mind is confirmed and encouraged in virtue, and kept aloof from the impression of bad example.

O! with what emotion do I look back on the expended portion of my life, and confess that thou hast led me, protected me, ruled me, and blessed me according to thy infinite goodness, and that to thy decrees alone I am indebted for the tranquillity of my soul, and the peace of my conscience.

JUNE 18.

All is Vanity.

THE whole world is a theatre of vanity. "All is vanity," Solomon has already declared; and at the spectacle of every thing I am constrained to repeat: "All is indeed vain!" I have not been so long on the earth without having received reiterated proofs of this assertion. I turn my thoughts back to my past existence; and behold it is vain. My former juvenile bloom, my infantine pleasures, my gay vacancy of mind, my tranquillity, my innocence,—where are all these advantages? They are no more; for they were vain. I then regard my present life, and the joys which still recreate me:—how soon, too, will the hour be here when I must say of them also: "Ah! they were all entirely vain!" Now is the most agree-

able season of the year; but how few weeks will yet elapse before I shall be forced to exclaim: "This decoration of the fields, these delights of the country, this general sweetness of nature, this smiling aspect of the trees, this universally ravishing advance of summer, ah! it is all quite vain!"

But can nothing then shelter me from this predominant vanity of all the surrounding creation—nothing permanent present itself in opposition to this apparently all-pervading transitoriness and instability? O! how miserable should I be if this were my real situation! But, thank God! in the midst of all these vanities there are still possessions which are neither evanescent, nor productive of disquietude. Wisdom, godliness, the approbation of the Lord, the gratifications of the soul in the chief good, endeavours and strivings for the glorification of the Almighty—these, these possessions are exalted above all the vanity of the world. Here is inconstancy: there everything follows me into eternity. Here are shadows and dreams: there light and truth. Here is food for the eyes: there refreshment for the soul. Here is sadness: there ecstasy. Here is loss: there gain.

Bend all thy powers, O soul, to strive after these real and lasting blessings; and form, with the dawn of this day, a firm resolution to be neither blinded nor seduced by the objects of vanity. Accustom thyself to Solomon's mode of thinking: say at the view of every vain allurement that may to-day offer itself to thy notice: "It is all mere vanity. Exact not from me, friends, my attachment: your friendship is vain. Riches, I will not abandon myself to you: your gifts are vain. Wisdom of men, I will not idolize thee: thy superiority is vain. Honour, thou shalt not charm me: thy enticements are vain. Life, thou shalt not be my only wish: my attachment to thee and thy allurements is still vain. World, thou shalt not have dominion over my heart: thyself, and all that is in thee are vain. I will seek those possessions, that happiness, those joys, which shall even then remain, when all the vanity of the earth has perished. I am destined for God, for Jesus, for heaven. God, and Jesus, and heaven shall be the only objects of my love, of my sacrifices, of my pleasures."

JUNE 19.

The Duty of Humility.

However much godly fear, knowledge, understanding, and the love of my fellow-creatures may gladden my heart, still all these desirable qualities constitute only a blinding splendour, and not blissful piety, so long as my spirit is deficient in that humility, the first of all Christian virtues, which gives to the mind strength and joyfulness for the exercise of reverence towards the Divine Being, for resignation to the will of God, and for faithful obedience, and which preserves it from self-darkness and pride, and incites it to steadfast devotion. And to what sacred feeling can I, a weak sinful mortal, be more strongly engaged by duty, than to humility? What good is there in me, that I have a right to be proud? Is not all my righteousness God's work, and is it not mixed with numerous failings and follies? Can I in truth boast with a clear conscience of my fidelity and willingness, or of my obedience and submission, or of my integrity and love of veracity? No, I must confess before thee, thou Searcher of hearts, with humiliation and penitence, that I have sinned against thee, and that I am not worthy to be called thy child. I must confess, that I have not always fulfilled my duties and thy commandments with a ready alacrity, nor always performed them out of love and veneration towards thee, but often from vanity, and in order to be praised by men; and that I have neglected and overlooked many opportunities of doing good, which thou hast granted to me. How dare I then, with this conviction, to extol my own virtue, or to be proud of my actions? No, lowliness and subjection alone become me, who stumble as a child: only through the most humble acknowledgment of my own weakness and sinfulness can I become worthy of of thy approbation. So often as I pour out my heart to thee in prayer, I will strike my breast and say: "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!" Never, Almighty Father, will I forget that I am dependent upon thee, and that I strive in vain to withdraw myself from thy omnipotence, or to rebel against thy decrees. In humility will I yield myself up to thy counsels, and with awe confess, "Lord, what thou doest, is well done?"

With these sentiments I shall succeed in correcting my heart, and shall daily advance in goodness; for humility opens my eyes, that I may perceive my errors; but pride blinds me, and deprives me of the power to practise what is right; it renders me careless and indolent, and plunges me into perdition.

JUNE 20.

The Knowledge of Truth derived from God and his holy Scriptures.

I OWE it to God alone that I know the way of truth and wisdom, and that I have strength to walk in this way, and to escape the meandering paths of folly. It is God's work, that I know my salvation and my destination, that I know how to value properly the goods and the joys of the earth, and permit myself not to be dazzled by perishable gold and silver, for which fools barter the peace of their conscience and the quiet of their hearts, without reflecting that their souls are immortal, and that their dwelling-place is in heaven. How happy am I rendered by this knowledge, when I allow myself to be guided by it: how undisturbed is my tranquillity, when I obey its exhortation, and pursue not the path of vanity, but the footsteps of wisdom, in which my Saviour has already preceded me! Then no repentance grieves me, then I feel no terror, but look with cheerful hope towards a mysterious futurity, and to that more sublime existence which is prepared for me in heaven. In order, therefore, that I may not wander from the road which leads to my eternal health, I will often and thankfully drink out of the rich fountain of wisdom which God has opened for me in the holy word. The book which is above all books shall be my counsellor, my teacher, my guide; I will renovate in my heart the tidings of life, which this volume contains, whenever I feel that my affection for that which is good has been enfeebled, and that my heavenly calling, my everlasting country, is lost to my sight. Thus will my soul be strengthened by God himself, both in the inclination for, and the exercise of righteousness; it

will fail not in its great appointment, will trifle not with its high worth, will forfeit not its rest; it will not aspire merely at that which is on the earth, but it will raise itself on high to that which decayeth not and is treasured above; and neither will temporal sufferings disquiet it, nor the world's wealth intoxicate it, nor death affright it.

Omniscient God! grant to me the spirit of wisdom and understanding, that I may this day, and on every yet remaining day of my life, order my course before thee! How much wisdom do I require, that I may choose nothing save that which is truly profitable for me! How much wisdom, that I may not allow myself to be carried away, and brought into destruction by the vanities of the world! How much wisdom that I may act conformably both to my common and my particular profession! How much wisdom, finally, that I may reflect salutarily on death and eternity! This whole extent—this happiness of wisdom, vouchsafe to me, O merciful God! Without thee I am abandoned to folly, and through folly to perdition for ever.

JUNE 21.

Time and Eternity.

TIME and eternity are the grand considerations which I must always maintain in my heart—the important objects which I must always weigh against each other, and the vast difference of which I must learn and lay to mind, if time is to be abundant for me in blessings, or eternity fraught with my salvation. Do I think of the days that are past, I am amazed at their fleetness and their brevity. Eighty years is a short term for immortal spirits, which are capable of living longer, and destined to a longer existence: a short term in comparison to the life of the patriarchs. And my life is not only actually short, but what proves more melancholy is, that it is rendered to me still shorter through my own feelings. I scarcely experience that I live; I do not enjoy my days; it seems to me as if I had not lived them. But who can measure eternity? We may add together millions of years,

we may subtract them from eternity: it will still lie before us undiminished. As little as I can determine the rapid descent of light, the number of the stars, the multiplicity of my thoughts, so little can I define what eternity is. I mount continually higher up, and yet remain always at the bottom!

The contemplation of the duration of time as well as of eternity conveys to me an admonitory lesson. My time is so short, and yet I often complain that it is long. I grieve over the scanty distribution of the days of man, and yet become frequently a rash spendthrift with regard to this limited and fugitive time, and seek to abridge it through useless and trifling things. If I only made a strict and well-regulated division of my business, I should find that I do not want time itself, but the will to employ it carefully and considerately. I should always find something to do which might better my heart. I should find that though time may be short, it is long enough for preparation for eternity. But if the continuation of eternity is infinitely extended, so ought it also to prove to me the strongest stimulus to direct my exertions to immortality, and to dispose of my time consistently with its value.

To thee, then, O my God, be the whole course of my life devoted; in thy fear will I pass it. I will not live to myself but to thee: thou, who hast died for me, shalt likewise live in me. Widely removed from me be every extravagant dissipation of time, every abuse of this costly gift; be it my joy to spend my time in communion with thee, my God and my Father, and to employ the hours of my solitude in the improvement of my heart.

JUNE 22.

God's Power and Blessings everywhere conspicuous.

On all sides, wherever I may be, the Godhead surrounds me, with its power and its blessing; on all sides I observe the most conspicuous traces of the divine efficacy. The sun, which is arrayed in overwhelming brightness, presents in a

most wonderful manner to my eyes the glory of him who made it, the moon, though clad in fainter beams, has still splendour enough to display to me the adorable Deity and his extraordinary perfections. The stars, notwithstanding that they are fixed at an incalculable distance, and diminished almost into glittering points, come forward with their testimony and unite in glorifying the Creator. The majesty of the great God exhibits itself in the roaring winds and in the raging storms. Every flower, as it flourishes gay in its beauty, and breathes forth the sweetest perfume, invites me to the love and admiration of its Author, since all that is ornamental and noble in his works he has produced for man, and likewise therefore for me. Each bird that sings, each stream that murmurs, excites me to the praise of the framer of all, or chides my ingratitude. But in me does God attain his purposes? Do I so walk, as if I saw him who is invisible, since truly to walk with him is the highest dignity, and to be in fellowship with him the only felicity?

Alas! I am forced to bewail and mourn over my heart, when I feel my own insensibility, and consider the just accusations which my conscience makes against me for being so little heedful of the wonders of the Omnipotent, and of the benefits of his divine goodness. Were I more attentive to all the mercies which the Almighty bestows upon me, to the blessings which he sheds upon me in overflowing munificence, how could I murmur and complain of my fate, how could I be despondent and downcast, how could I anxiously concern myself about the morrow? Should I not then act better for the quiet of my heart, fulfil better the duty which God's infinite affection prescribes to me? Can he forsake or neglect me, who has rescued me out of so many troubles, who has refreshed my heart with his comfort on so many sorrowful days, has rejoiced me with his love, has cheered me, and raised me erect with his grace?—Yes, I perceive, with confusion and remorse, how vilely I offend against him, when I remember not his benefits with thankful emotion, and praise not his goodness; when my soul forgets the ample beneficence which he has exercised towards me; when my discontented heart employs itself only in reckoning the cares to which it has been subject, the pains which it has endured, the losses which it has suffered. To-day I know and confess

that even my afflictions and my cares belong to the favours which God bestows upon me, to the blessings by which he distinguishes me, and that even in the saddest periods of my life his goodness has never ceased to proclaim itself in my destiny.

O! how should I not love such a God, not hearken to him with delight! Yes, I feel the power of thy love, and the force of thy law, thou most kind and most adorable Being! It shall be my pleasure to serve thee; and to love thee above all shall be my happiness. Here is my heart, here are my resolves, here is my gratitude, here is my love. Let all be solemnly consecrated to thee.

JUNE 23.

Intercourse with God.

Even an intercourse with wise and pious men has a highly beneficial influence on our life and on our virtue; but the intercourse with God bestows infinitely greater advantages than can be expected from a connexion with men, however greatly endowed with knowledge and holiness. Nothing can so uphold me in sorrow, nothing so ardently inflame my zeal, nothing make me stronger and more courageous, nothing more successfully preserve me from sin, than frequent and confidential intercourse with God, and the lively remembrance of his majesty and goodness. If I often seek his countenance in retired devotion, I shall feel myself excited to appear always more faithful and more upright before him. If I often consider the worth and the magnitude of his love; if I take to heart the sacred and unsearchable measures which he has adopted through Jesus Christ, his Son, for my redemption and for my sanctification; if the number and the importance of his benefits become the repeated theme of my amazement, my gratitude towards him will burn with redoubled heat, my love will be augmented in fervency and sincerity, and my desire to render myself worthy of tenderness, such as that which God entertains for me, will receive unwonted energy and force. If I often lament to him my

frailties and my transgressions, and petition his support, his Spirit will grant to me an impulse towards, and strength in goodness. If I often contemplate him in his sanctity, I shall myself guard against wronging him in my sins. My intercourse with this all-hallowed Being will already cause me to feel by anticipation a part of that blessedness which will be afforded to me in eternity in the friendship and society of God.

Would it not be a procedure void of all defence, were I to sport with such felicity, or to be indifferent to so much kindness? No; I will not act thus madly. I will even this morning begin to hold communion with God, and embrace the determination to persevere in this intercourse during the residue of the hours of the day. The distractions and temptations of this life enforce the absolute necessity of seeking God in silent worship, and thus exalting the heart above all terrestrial falsehood and showy deceit. Let it then be my daily occupation to approach God in reverential prayer; to enter into suppliant fellowship with thee, thou holy and adorable Divinity, and full of confidence to cry to thee as to my Father in heaven. Awaken me, O God, through thy benefactions, through thy revelation, and through thy Spirit, that I may continue perpetually in converse with thee. Let me ever experience joy and rapture, when I draw near to thee in silent adoration. Teach me day by day to conduct myself earnestly according to thy pleasure, that thine, and thy Son's approbation may light upon me for ever. Let me learn by my own sensations how pleasant and blessed a thing it is to be engaged with my God. Let me often abandon the earth and converse with thee, in order that I may hereafter enjoy eternal intercourse with thee in heaven.

JUNE 24.

Faith in Jesus the certain Source of Peace.

When I regard my past life with attention, I find many instances in which I wished for things which, if I had obtained them, would have rendered me unhappy. On the

contrary, I observe a sufficient number of objects which constituted the subject of my apprehension, and yet proved to me a source of prosperity and felicity. The wise providence of God directs all events in so wonderful a manner, and often so contradictorily to all human expectation and hope, that it is impossible with my short-sighted notions to determine with certainty, what is really my profit or my disadvantage. Happiness is the aim of all my wishes; but my ignorance and my passions blind me so much, that without the governance and the guidance of the omniscient God, it would be impossible for me to attain the point at which I aspire. I should be the most wretched among all the creatures of the earth if I were abandoned to my own direction and impulses. I should constantly fail in the acquirement of the true good, and go headlong forward to meet the ruin of my own conscience; and if I obtained all that I desire, then should I, when too late, repent my ignorance and my folly.

Yet amid the secrets and all the incomprehensibleness of the government of God, I have still a leading line according to which I may walk and become happy. If I only strictly adhere to the precepts of Christianity, if I be of one mind with Jesus Christ, then will the lot, whatever it may be, that falls to my share, always prove the most beneficial for me. To this end, my soul, ever follow with the fullest submission the voice of the Divinity which speaks to thee, and those principles of faith, love, and hope by which thy Redeemer allowed himself to be conducted; so thou wilt never murmur at thy situation, or be discontented with the ordinances of God. In all that thou encounterest, inquire not, whether it be conformable to thy wish or conducive to thy prosperity; but whether it be salutary for thy heart, and whether it be adapted to confirm thee in goodness, to remove thee from wickedness, to render thy spirit fit for heaven; whether it be an appointment of God, or a melancholy consequence of thy own folly and levity. Desire and expect not a perfectly tranquil and happy existence. There is no station in the world which has not its disquiet and its misery. But a believing and upright mind, and a firm confidence in God and Jesus, afford comfort under the pressure of the worst calamities that can come upon thee, and will permit even thyself to consider them as nothing else than a step to

thy eternal welfare. With this disposition of thought thou wilt be satisfied in all circumstances and free from trouble, and have no need to tremble before anything.

JUNE 25.

Reflections on Sleep.

Sleep belongs to the unknown, unnoticed blessings of God. I have already passed so many nights, and yet I have never considered how wonderful and gracious the government of God is in respect to sleep! How indispensable is sleep to the preservation of my life! All the day through I am straining my nerves and sinews: the incessent use of them would soon exhaust the fluids of the nervous system, which no medium of nourishment could again restore; but a new afflux of the humours is effected through sleep, in which I gather strength and refreshment. In this state my situation is most extraordinary. I live without being aware of it. Pulsation, the flow of the blood, respiration, the separation of the fluids, constantly proceed. But a stupefaction seizes the senses; the muscles by degrees move more and more languidly, and my limbs at length lose all their activity. I forget all things that are around me. I forget the near and immediate world, and station myself in another. Thoughts, fancies, and images arise in my mind which I combine at random, and which represent themselves to me as if they were real. Dreams disquiet and delight me, busy and deceive me; and my soul rests not even in sleep from action and energy.

What wonders are here united! How much is concentrated here by which the omniscient foresight of God is illustrated. But how many obscurities are there still at which the human understanding must pause, and on which it can only ponder in tacit amazement! How can I otherwise than with the most reverential astonishment and the liveliest thankfulness, look back upon the elapsed night! O may also I remember with the most ardent emotion the Lord who closed my eyes, who preserved my blood in its course, who

defended my life from every danger, and invigorated my body by gentle repose! And how were it possible with such an assemblage of miracles and blessings not to admire the first, and extol the latter?

No, so destitute of feeling my heart must not certainly be! Behold, Almighty Benefactor, with a deeply affected soul do I turn my thoughts to thee. I bless thy inexpressible goodness which has allowed me to find rest and security under the covert of thy wings. I feel how much thy benevolence has enlivened and fortified me through soft and placid sleep, and I sanctify to thee this first sensation of renovated vigour and spirit. I sanctify to thee the first breath of my lips. Yes, my whole life do I consecrate to thee and to thy grace. In whose hands could it indeed better rest than in thine, omnipotent, beneficent Father? Thou knowest all my necessities; to thee the most hidden wishes of my heart are disclosed; to thee, therefore, and to thy favour, be all my concerns likewise commended.

JUNE 26.

Transitoriness of all worldly Prosperity.

The world subsists and will continue to subsist so long as it shall please its Ruler to maintain it. The world still subsists, but its pleasures pass away, and all its possessions are inconstant, all its inhabitants perishable. I also go forward to meet death, and with death my eternal destiny. This is the saving, blissful faith, for which I am indebted to my Redeemer; to him who brought life and immortality into light through his gospel. Strengthened and encouraged by this belief, I contemplate tranquilly and fearlessly the transitoriness and the futility of all that is terrestrial, and the shortness and fleetness of my own earthly life; for, if I have obtained through Christ Jesus a heavenly calling, why should I grieve that this imperfect existence disappears, and that the goods and gratifications of this present state satisfy not my longing after more complete happiness, and appease not my thirst for knowledge? Why should I even bewail that the connexions in which I feel the most happy are torn asunder

by death? No, I have no cause to lament the time which is vanished for ever, if I have employed it according to God's will, in my preparation for eternity; if I have truly and zealously sown the seeds of good works, from which I shall hereafter reap an endless harvest; if I have guarded my heart with all industry, and purified it with all carefulness. Not with the bitter pang of repentance, but with the blest conviction of guiltlessness, may I revert to the period swept away in the flood of years, and triumph in it and boast of it: the future I may also regard without dread, and when my hour strikes, appear before the throne of God in confident hope.

May I be always while I yet remain on earth in this blessed condition of mind! May no day pass over me which I shall not have applied to the salvation of my soul; may my eyes and my thoughts be fixed on those higher donations which my faith points out to me, and of the possession of which my Saviour assures me; may my heart feel a rapturous joy when the great day of my last farewell shall arrive! O Lord, how glad shall I then be at thy coming to release me from the misery with which the world oppresses me! How will my heart pant with delight when I behold a new heaven and a new earth! How inexpressibly blessed shall I feel when there shall be no death, no sorrow, no groan, no anguish more! A state of such bliss well deserves that I should qualify myself for it by a godly imitation of Jesus.

JUNE 27.

Value of Godliness.

I WILL not pusillanimously and timorously torment myself with anxiety about my life; for my heavenly Father knows what I require, and he takes care in my behalf. But, then only does he protect my heart from overmuch care for my daily bread, when I cheerfully and faithfully practise the duties of my profession, and shun no difficulty, no effort, no hardship, or toil. He has kindly and wisely provided, that

with true and constant industry the necessaries of life shall never be wanting to me; but I ought also contentedly and humbly to receive from his hands the smaller gifts, and not demand that he should heap upon me abundance. He, who distributes his gifts with perfect discernment, knows how much is profitable for me, and if he appoints to me only a scanty portion of the goods of fortune, I will honour his wisdom and repine not. The greatest of all gain is to possess a quiet and contented spirit. As often as I have felt unhappy, and complained of my lot, contentment did not fly from me because I possessed so very little, but because I wished and desired so much, because I was so extravagant to please. Therefore will I endeavour ever more and more to moderate my longings and my ambition, and often consider that a cheerful and temperate heart alone, and not superfluity and riches, is the foundation of a happy existence. If I possess but a pure and untroubled conscience—the love of my kindred and the love of God, then do I require nothing more to ensure my felicity. I look around among my brethren, and find not, that those are really happy whom the world esteem to be so; rather do I see that their cares have no end, that they little enjoy their prosperity, and are exposed to numerous temptations, which subdue the greater part of them. Ought not this to make me contented with my destiny, and assuage all the boisterous wishes of my heart? Yes, if I have raiment and food, I will permit myself to be satisfied; and how great is the favour which God evinces to me, in defending me from anxiety as to my support, and giving me my daily bread! how has his goodness manifested itself towards me, by his guarding me from the enticements of avarice, lasciviousness, and luxury; and granting to me, through that mediocrity of wealth which is my allotment, the strongest instigation to useful and honourable activity! O! these divine benefits are truly worthy of the sincerest thanks, for they secure the peace of my bosom, and the quiet of my conscience, if I am but contented with what I possess, and with what God has apportioned to me. O! then, my God, be this vow of my heart offered up to thee, that I will accept from thee with gratitude and satisfaction of mind, whatever thy wisdom shall impart to me, however small it may be; and that when anxieties oppress me, I will trust in thee and hope in thee as

long as I live. Assist me with thy grace, that I may fulfil this protestation, and through thankful contentment become always more worthy of thy blessings.

JUNE 28.

Life a Period of Probation.

The days of my stay in this world are days of trial. I find myself in situations and relations of life in which I receive innumerable evidences of the goodness of God. The Deity bestows upon me so many benefits, both of soul and body, in order to search me, and to learn how I am disposed. He, indeed, as the omniscient reader of the heart, needs no such means. It is a method of proving me, which takes place both on my own account, and for the sake of others, that the sentiments of my mind may be made manifest. He has thus long nourished my life, to see if, perhaps, I would myself be won, and begin of myself to rectify my heart. He opened to me the vast spectacle of his wonders, that I might perceive his benignity and glorify him. He has evinced to me so much and such extraordinary mercy, that he might ever attract me more to himself. Even the things which I designate evil have this intention. All adverse events, which occur to me externally, all allurements to sin are destined to me by the Lord, that he may make experiment whether I shall endure the former with composure and through my faith withstand the latter.

I need not be surprised that my life is such a period of trial, in which curses and blessings, good and bad, are laid before me. It is intended to make evident what sort of choice I will adopt;—if I will select the good and renounce the bad. The counsel of the Lord ordained that the only begotten Son of God was constrained to pass his life under hard trials. And all these trials would only promote my well-being and exalt my spirit, were I such in mind as Jesus was, and loved my Father who is in heaven, as he did; and if I courageously used the weapons, with which he fought against temptation, I should not then range myself on the side of un-

righteousness, but avail myself of my trial to exhibit my faith, my sentiments, and my champion-courage. What did it harm Job, that his comforter said, "Curse God, and die?" He showed in his answer that he was very differently disposed. His explanation was; "Have we not received good from God, and shall we not receive evil likewise?"

But are not these examples of steadfast and undaunted piety placed before my eyes, that I may emulate them, and arrive at the consciousness of my own power and worth? Must I not confess with shame, that even the same arms with which they combated against the assaults of the enticements of the world, and conquered them, are furnished to me? So will I, therefore, endeavour to follow their pattern, honour their virtues, seek the intercourse of the pious, love their company, imitate their example, and draw from the same source of grace out of which they have procured the strength by the means of which they attained to so high a degree of self-denial and patience. Thus I shall become as firm in faith as Abraham; as magnanimous as Moses; as godly as David; as zealous as Elias; as perfect as Paul.

I supplicate thy support, O God, through which these thy servants were found so faithful in their trials. Let me experience it, not in the view of indulging my indolence and my effeminacy, but to bless and crown my efforts. I will enter with the present day into the course of godliness, I will devote the yet remaining days of my trial to eternity, I will fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of the everlasting life to which I am called.

JUNE 29.

Faith and Hope in God.

A JOYFUL belief and a firm trust in God and Jesus are the only way to a tranquil and happy life. Haste then and strive, my soul, that by true faith thou mayest become a participator of that great felicity which is proffered to thee through thy heavenly calling in Christ Jesus! How well wilt thou then bear the most toilsome existence, when thou art assured of God's

grace though Christ, and of thy eternal blessedness! Then will this life appear to thy eyes nothing more than a short though fatiguing road, in which thou hurriest to the most felicitous possible state. Nor is the expectation of the future that which alone will soothe thee; for even in regard to the present, the sweetest promises are given to thee. It is true God allures man to himself by no earthly pleasures; but he knows the weakness of the human heart, and the power of the impulses of the feelings and of the senses. He knows what deep wounds and troubles of this life can smite the mortal breast. Therefore he has vouchsafed to us the assurance, that in respect even to terrestrial things he will make provision for us, and not allow us to be tried beyond our strength. Will he not in this act faithfully and truly? But what may we not anticipate from a God who yielded up for us his only begotten Son? Will he not for his sake grant everything to us? He has redeemed us from everlasting perdition; far more then will he also know how to release us out of our temporal afflictions. Since for our spiritual felicity he has made such wonderful arrangements, he will likewise have the means in his hands to extricate us from our bodily difficulties and necessities.

Herein also will I give him honour, and steadfastly rely upon his omnipotence, wisdom, and goodness. Should worldly anxious cares disquiet my bosom, I will, in confidence in his promises, pour them out before him in prayer. Such a faith will not only strengthen me under all distresses, but I shall besides discover in my own destiny the most glorious confirmation of this belief itself; and daily increase in the conviction, that the Lord of the world alone merits my affiance, my love, and my faith.

Now, O Lord God, remove for evermore mistrust and disbelief out of my feeble heart. Let the numerous proofs of thy mercy, with which all my years have been filled, be made to wake in my soul an ever-increasing trust in thy kindness. How many days already hast thou preserved me! on each of them thou openedst thy generous, bountiful hands, and hast filled, satisfied, and strengthened me with pleasant and good things. O! why should I be still concerned about the days to come? Time may take its flight, and all objects on the earth may change! It is sufficient that thou art eter-

nal and unalterable. My weakness and my ignorance may be immense; still dost thou exceedingly above all that we can ask or conceive, and knowest the best means of our happiness! This day may be as full of sorrow as my past life! it is enough to be convinced that thou hast ordained for each day a joy and a blessing. My whole life may be embittered with toil!—it is compensation in abundance, that I dare to expect life where perpetual blessedness reigns. Thither let me direct my gaze; through this let me be invigorated; and there let me at length arrive, when my days in the present world are at an end.

JUNE 30.

The Close of Life suggested by the Termination of the Month.

This month likewise is for ever gone! and as it has vanished, never to return, so will my whole life fade away, and, ere I think of it, be no more. God grant only that I may be as cheerful at the close of my life as I now am, while free from any particular sorrow, I meet, with the present day, the conclusion of the month! But can I, in regard to the days which have so rapidly passed away, be so perfectly at ease? Need I make no reproaches to myself relative to my past existence? O! if this were the case, how contented could I be to-day, even though I knew that the termination of this month would be the termination of my life! The termination of my life! What a terrific expression would this be for me, if to-day it should be realized! My tranquillity is quite dispelled when I think that death may be close beside me, that to-day it may overtake me. For how extremely wretched should I be if my life should this day end, and I were forced in another world to deliver up an account of all the months of my life, when the present reckoning already makes me so sad.

I must confess that my heart has no reason to be unconcerned when it ruminates on the speedily-elapsed month. If I compare thy benefits, my God, with my own unthankfulness, thy forbearance with my own obstinacy, thy goodness with my own unworthiness, thy commandments with my

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own conduct—ah! then shall I be forced indeed to feel exceeding anxiety about my eternal fate; then truly must the thought of my mortality become to me a frightful idea. And, would that I might be deeply afflicted with my state! This were that godly grief of which no man has ever repented. This grief would render me wiser and more careful in the use of my time. O God, operate this sentiment within me; and when thou hast humbled me through the penitent recollection of my offences, encourage me again through the comfort of thy grace! It is my earnest purpose to employ to my salvation, and to dedicate to thy honour the yet remaining period of my life. On the accomplishment of this resolution will the tranquillity and happiness of my life depend. O Lord, thou who hast given me the will, vouchsafe to me also the execution!

JULY 1.

The Preservation of Life ascribed to God.

The preservation of my life is one of the greatest wonders, and one which God every moment works in regard to me. When I consider the fine organization of my body, and think of the numberless dangers to which it is exposed; or when I reflect upon my own heedlessness and carelessness in guarding my existence, I cannot help being astonished that I still live, and that I have not long since become a prey to death. There must, there must be a God, who takes as much concern for each individual man as for the continued duration of all the circle of nature. If it were not so, the cradle would have been my grave, childhood my destruction, sleep my death, and every day my perdition; I still live; I can still enjoy life; I am still capable of activity, and am still in health. All these benefits convince me more powerfully than the strongest arguments which reason can adduce, that there is a God; that this God is my Father, my friend, and the maintainer of my life.

If I were not persuaded of this, fear must necessarily fall upon me at each dawn of day, and at each approach of

night, and overwhelm me with distress; and every month would open prospests to me that would strike my whole soul with terror. Yonder, I should be obliged to say to myself, —yonder I see perils in which I shall certainly perish; there I behold an enemy who will accomplish his wicked designs against me; there I discover impious men who will plunge me into the ruin they have prepared for me; yonder I see floods that will swallow me up, and flames that will consume me; yonder I perceive a misfortune that will totally overthrow me. With such despair in my thoughts should I look forward to each day if I had not the firmest conviction that the wise and gracious providence of God watches over my life.

I praise thee from my whole heart, merciful and most loving Father, that thou grantest to me so much consolation and quiet of mind, through faith in thy providence: O how greatly should I dishonour thy goodness, if with such undeniable proofs of thy protecting providence I should still be void of belief! Far distant from me be such ungrateful conduct. Continually will I represent to myself the demonstrations and testimonies of thy goodness, and on every new lapse of time excite myself by it to place my reliance on thee. And this shall, even on the present morning, the commencement of a new month and a new day, be my task of comfort. In affiance on thy almighty goodness I again enter upon life. However perishable, however weak it may be, I depend on thy strength, through which thou wilt invigorate and defend it. However little I can foresee the risks and calamities in which I may perhaps be involved, I trust in thy power and in thy wisdom, which can turn them all aside, and to which they are all visible and disclosed. I know not myself what I ought either to wish for or to dread. Do thou benignantly fulfil all my desires, when they shall be profitable for me, and release me from all evil that may render me unhappy. Let me pass the residue of my time in this world under thy charge, under the grace of Jesus, and under the government of the Holy Ghost, and enjoy the felicity of being blessed and beloved by thee.

JULY 2.

Calamity and Woe inseparable from Mortality.

So long as I remain in this world, I must hold myself continually prepared for hours full of care and sorrow. To desire pure unmixed satisfaction is to expect that which is impossible, and conduces not to our peace; for in the school of affliction we learn that wisdom which qualifies us to become denizens of heaven. Since my body, from its very constitution, is so fragile and liable to decay; since my intellectual views are so scanty and confined, and my desires so insatiable; since my fellow-mortals are so faithless, so uncharitable, and so selfish; and since all things by which I am surrounded are so inconstant, and of such short duration; since I myself have but a very small period to pass on the earth, how can I desire or hope that the days of my life should not be mingled with unpleasantness? And if this were indeed practicable, how presumptuous, how forgetful of God, how cruel, how barbarous, should I become! How little should I think of the Lord, of my own end, and of eternity! I have too often experienced in myself how much a little continuance of prosperity puffs me up, and renders me insensible to all the feelings of religion and virtue; what than would become of my heart if this destructive felicity were still more enchanting and more permanent?

O God, how propitiously dost thou deal with me, when thou sometimes humblest me through troubles. If hitherto an uninterrupted enjoyment of the pleasures of this life had kept me in a state of perpetual fascination, I should not perhaps be now kneeling before thee and praying. I should rather, instead of worshipping thee in holy converse, be studying how to augment the indulgence of my sinful and flagitious lusts. Praise be to thee then for the important advantage which the condition in which thou hast placed me bestows upon me! Full of reverence and thankfulness, I kiss that hand which has imposed upon me a little share of distress. Yes, truly, my calamities are very trifling, very insignificant, when I compare them with the afflictions which so many of my brethren are compelled to endure. I need

only regard the vast multitude of the maimed, the sick, the frantic, the melancholy, the poor, and the persecuted that surround me, and I must gratefully perceive how much I, with my crosses, am to be envied. Whether sound limbs, or flourishing health, or a right understanding, or a sufficiency of fortune, or a contented heart, or a sincere friend, be the gift that smiles upon me, any one of these blessings, if I possess not them all, fully indemnifies me.

I will not murmur, far less will I despond, when it pleases God to let me taste a few of those sorrows which he has scattered over the earth. Who knows what I shall this day have to undergo? Be it as it may; I will await it with resignation, and by patient resignation and hope encourage my heart. This much, at least, I already know, that if God destines to me any suffering, he has also appointed for me comfort and solace under it. This much am I assured of, that in such circumstances I may dare to anticipate from the benevolent providence of my God every mark of his tenderness, and every alleviation, that are essential to my peace. And should even my expectation partially disappoint me, I am at least certain that death will one day remove all my griefs, and render them sweet to me. Now, Lord, I commence this new day with the firmest resolution to submit myself amid all events to thy wise governance. Hast thou doomed to me on this day cheerful hours, I will enjoy them with thanks. Hast thou, on the contrary, selected sorrowful ones for me, these also will I accept without repining, and honour thee through patience, composure, and hope.

JULY 3.

Happiness of Celestial Spirits.

I WALK in the company of those glorified, happy spirits who make it their benevolent office to love and to bless all those who shall hereafter be their associates and brethren. Even now, although unobserved, they surround me in this nascent hour of day, and mark with rapture the devotion with which I hallow anew to my Creator his reiterated gift of life.

They already prepare themselves at the command of God to bear me in their arms, and carry me forward to that happiness which the Lord, in compliance with my prayer, has destined to me. Oh! what honour, what felicity is it to obtain the blessing and the applause of perfect spirits! I am at this moment, in which I elevate my heart with fervency to heaven, a favourite of these beatified beings. And why should not I exert myself to be constantly their favourite, constantly their joy?

I was formerly the object of their delight as I clung full of hope around the neck of my maternal parent. O! how did they love and bless me, while I was yet a child of uncorrupted disposition, and my heart a shrine of the Holy Ghost! How did they rejoice so oft as they beheld me with infantine, pious simplicity, lifting up my hands on high to the abode of the Almighty. O! that I were thus still their source of joy! But, alas! I have often grieved them by my conduct. The older I grew the more I became dissimilar to them—the less share did I retain of their esteem. How troubled must these celestial inhabitants have been, when they beheld my hard heart, which shrunk back within itself from the wretched and the needy! How concerned must they have been for my soul, when they saw me hastening on in the path of vice to my perdition! What a subject of pity must I have appeared to them, when I promised myself happiness and satisfaction from the gratification of my sensual inclinations; when through my life I scandalized the earth, occasioned sorrow to heaven, and gladdened hell!

Yet no more, my celestial, beatified friends, will I be the cause of your compassion and your sorrow. I will seek to render myself more worthy of your affection, by forming myself according to your demeanour, and striving to become as holy, as faithful to God, as rich in love as I discover you to be. Henceforth I will be as zealous to please you through my actions, as I have hitherto given you pain through my sins. Nothing shall be so dear to me as your applause,—nothing so desirable as your blessing. My good deeds may remain unknown to the world, and be even covered with slander so that they be only known to heaven and praised by the angels. I am now going into the society of men, but I will never forget that I am placed in much more distin-

guished company. The angels are around me; they are perhaps much nearer to me than my ordinary partners in life. At all events they love me better than any one of my most valued friends is capable of doing. O God, render me always more deserving of thy love and of the love of thy immortal servants! Implant in my mind those sublime sentiments through which the angels win thy approbation. Erect me into a guardian angel to my brethren, and let me become as abundant in charity, as kind, as beneficent, as are thy white-robed ministers of light. And then vouchsafe to me, O Lord of hosts, the protection of thy angels, in all my ways. Grant, moreover, that when at last I shall approach to the period which is to establish me a sharer of their felicity, they may take their post around my death-bed, and that by them my soul may be wafted to Abraham's bosom. Then will they never more bewail me, but triumph and exult in me eternally.

JULY 4.

Proofs of a Life to come.

DARK and inscrutable as futurity and a great part of my destination are to me, this however I am aware of, that the future is for me extremely important, and that my abiding-place is not here. This earth cannot possibly be the spot where my entire destiny is to unfold itself. Were it actually the land of my appointment and my happiness, it would be necessary that, with all its charms, it should not be so wretched and so plenteous in tears; that this body should not have to struggle with so many changes and infirmities; and that the boundless longing of my soul after felicity should already here be satisfied. But in the situation in which I stand, all is enigma. The earth, my body, my soul, my entire fate, would be an inexplicable mystery to me, if it were ordained that I should find my destination in the present world. No; the plan of the providence of God must extend further than only to this short toilsome existence. I must be intended for much higher ends than merely to weep and then to be gay again, to

live and to die. And though there were nothing besides in the world that could afford me a satisfactory solution on this point, the death of my Saviour would do so. What! the Son of God shall have offered up his life, barely to render me for a brief space of time the possessor of a few scanty temporal enjoyments? He shall have relinquished the heavens only to make more agreeable to me a transient residence in the world? He shall have shed his blood to redeem me, and I shall, notwithstanding, feel so little of his redeeming grace as I actually do here? and though I should feel it more perfectly, I should lose the sweetest effects of this redemption in death? No; I must, through the merits of my Jesus, be created for infinitely higher felicity. There must be another world in reserve for me, where I shall enjoy in its utmost plenitude the happiness of being one of the ransomed of Jesus:—my soul must be immortal.

When I look at my terrestrial existence in this point of view, I behold it under an entirely different aspect. Even the most minute part of it now appears to me especially important and decisive, because so nearly connected with my everlasting doom. I must not compute my life according to the small number of days which it embraces, but according to the objects which are to be attained by it. Ought I not assiduously to scatter those seeds which will one day yield to me a crop of incorruptible fruits? Ought I not cautiously to dispose of that time which fixes my eternal destiny? In pursuance of this maxim, I will therefore, even to-day, through the grace of God, endeavour wisely to employ my time. I will always keep the lively remembrance of this truth in my soul, that I am not destined for this world alone, but for heaven. The more powerful this idea is in my mind, the more godly will my behaviour be. Heavenly joys will alone ravish me; heavenly possessions will alone awaken my desires; I shall love only heavenly society. And to this mode of thinking, bring me, O God, I beseech thee, through the potent efficacy of thy Spirit. How blessed will then this day be for me! What transports, what happy tranquillity of spirit, what felicity, shall I then feel both in life and in death.

JULY 5.

The Necessity of remembering our Weakness and Imperfection.

I CANNOT often enough call my weakness to remembrance, since my heart, amid all its imperfection, is so well pleased with its own qualities and so self-conceited. How willingly would this vain heart boast of its accomplishments and its superiority, and in these place its triumph and delight! But in this occupation I forget my defects and my frailties, which are yet more visible and greater than all my advantages! And still how often have I been constrained to sigh over these frailties, how often to be at variance with myself! I am now just awoke from sleep. Was not the state in which I found myself in my slumbers a state of feebleness and imperfection? Every day in which I live forms a large appendix to the tale of human misery. From the moment in which I open my eyes until the instant when I again close them for repose, every thing about me is weakness, infirmity, and wretchedness. I see how, with each returning morn, the tabernacle of my body becomes more fragile, how my powers decrease, how my spirit loses by degrees its elasticity, and how gradually I sink into that decay which is the forerunner of dissolution. And how painful do I in particular feel my incapacity when I consider those things which regard my spiritual attainments. Often has it been my wish to become a true Christian, and to be united in faith with Christ. With this resolution I made my morning return into the world; but scarcely had I entered it when I perceived how impotent I was to execute my purpose. To combat against evil, to bridle my passions, to govern my sensuality—these were often my firm determinations; but the first attack, one faint conflict, a slight trouble, immediately exhausted my fortitude, and I became a captive, notwithstanding all my eagerness for victory.

And what will this day be my fate? Shall I show myself to be stronger, more resolute, and bolder than I have hitherto done? Alas! I feel, O Lord, that if thy hand does not support me, if thy power is not mighty in my inability, I must inevitably fall. Strengthen me, therefore, thou Omnipotent, in all the struggles which either my heavenly or my

earthly vocation demands. Strengthen me in the battle against iniquity, and in my efforts to acquire purely Christian sentiments and feelings. Strengthen me in my belief in thy Son, my Redeemer: remind me of this when I would treat the foibles of my brethren with harshness and insensibility. This recollection will make me watchful and careful, and prompt me to fix my reliance on thy almighty assistance. In this manner I shall be able to overcome all my own deficiencies, and finally to attain that aim which thy goodness has been pleased to set up before me.

JULY 6.

Man's Unworthiness compared with God's Goodness.

I MUST obstinately shut my eyes, I must be ungrateful and destitute of feeling, if I would not observe the bounteous blessings of my God, not think of his love, and not be moved by the spectacle of his works. No, I am not thus void of every spark of human nature. I see the wonders of the omnipotence and the goodness of my Creator; I regard them with pleasure and astonishment; and am now in a particular degree affected, as I behold the blessings of God diffused in such rich profusion over the fields. No! benignant Author of my life, I am not ungrateful, I am not void of feeling, while I now contemplate the rising sun and its blessed effects. I meditate upon thee, I admire thee, I worship thee.

But do I then think also of myself—what am I, that through thy gifts thou so greatly favourest and delightest me? Do I feel how unworthy I am of all these marks of thy kindness? How often do I prize myself, in my haughty conceptions, as a lord of the creation, and forget that to thy free grace alone I owe all the abundance which thou showerest down into my lap! Do I then deserve that thou shouldst permit the plains to afford me nourishment, the sun to enlighten and warm me, all nature to transport me and bless me, and the whole universe to conduce to my service and my pleasure? How desert would be the world, how frightful nature, how lamentable life itself, if thou shouldst dispense thy blessings

only in proportion to my merits! No sunbeam would enliven me, no rain would refresh me, wert thou to distribute thy sunshine and thy rain by the scale of my virtue. But that thou, notwithstanding my unworthiness, dost so exceedingly well by me, is a consequence of thy grace; and for this grace I am indebted to my holy Redeemer. To him are my acknowledgments due for his love and intercession, if thy blessings still flow down upon me in gentle streams, and my prayer is acceptable to thee. Even in the past night did he petition for me, and this morning also does he supplicate thee in my behalf. Were not this the case, I should not have beheld the present dawn; but have been carried off in my sleep and in my sins. And where should I now be? There, whither death has this night borne off thousands of the rich, the voluptuous, and the luxurious, who have entered into irremediable perdition. The more I consider this, the more ardent and the more sincere are my thanks. But I well perceive, notwithstanding all my attempts, how languid and flat the praise sounds which I ascribe to thee, and how little my gratitude is equivalent to thy benevolence.

Lord, inspire and rule thou my heart, that it may earnestly and acceptably extol thee. Let not my lips alone, but my whole soul, overflow with thy acclaim. It must appear conspicuous in all my actions, how much my heart wishes and strives duly to pay thee honour. I will love thee and fear thee; I will do good to the unfortunate; I will faithfully perform the duties of my profession; I will constantly remain true to godliness—this, O God, shall be my homage, and the chief business of the present day. With these sentiments I may rejoice and comfort myself in the anticipation of thy further love. Not this day only, but all my future days, will be distinguished by thy mercies. And all the cares and sorrows which have hitherto disquieted my life and seduced my heart into murmuring discontent, I will henceforth deem to be ordinances of thy wisdom, and as such humbly revere them. And when I shall hereafter be transplanted into that higher sanctuary where I shall for ever enjoy the fruits of my gratitude and piety, how blessed will be my end!

JULY 7.

Fidelity to God and Man.

The morning of every revolving day calls upon me to vow new fidelity to the Lord, to whom I have been consecrated through baptism. And to fulfil this vow ought to be the main occupation of my life. What avail all my virtues if I am not true and constant in the exercise of them? Fidelity ennobles all my good actions, and gives them their intrinsic value in the eyes of God. Nothing more is desired from a steward than that he may be found faithful. And what am I else than a steward, to whom the most high Sovereign has entrusted the management and care of goods of the greatest possible importance? My life, my talents, my powers, my knowledge, my intellect, constitute these precious goods, of the faithful use of which I must one day render up a minute account; and to be faithful in the employment of them is my vocation, my duty, my glory, and my salvation.

Through divine revelation, I have obtained a rich knowledge of God, and of the truths of religion. How much faithfulness is required to bring this knowledge into practice, and to direct all my doings according to it! In so large a circle of obligations as my common and my particular callings impose upon me, what punctual faithfulness is necessary in order to do justice to them all! It is my calling, to show myself to be an upright citizen of the world; but yet more so, a pious citizen of heaven. How faithful must I be to accomplish this part of my vocation, and not to neglect it! And when I reflect, that according to my fidelity will be framed that sentence which the eternal Judge will hereafter pronounce upon me, O! how momentous appear to me every word and every deed, how decisive every purpose and every effort of my heart!

But am I then also in such a spiritual condition, that I have no unfaithfulness of which to accuse myself, and nothing to fear from the everlasting Judge? Have I the hope of obtaining that illustrious title of honour the designation of a true servant of God, when he shall call me to my last

account?—Why am I so sad at this question? Why do I so hesitate to reply to it with YES!—Ah! I must confess that I have hitherto been a faithless and unconscientious steward to the Lord! Would that a sincere confession of my unfaithfulness, and an earnest intention henceforth to employ better the treasures committed to my keeping, might compensate in some measure for my former culpability! Heartily do I repent before thee, thou Omniscient, of my past inconstancy and indolence! With integrity of purpose do I repeat to thee my solemn promise to be more upright and zealous in thy service for the remainder of my days.

O God! I will begin this day to walk before thee in more righteousness and truth. Neither the difficulty of my duties, nor the toilsomeness of my life, nor the hatred and the persecution of the impious, nor the long duration of my struggle, nor the weakness of my abilities, shall prevent me from crowning this resolve with its accomplishment. All my endeavours shall be bent to display in the present as in the future, in great matters as in small, in agreeable as in disagreeable things, steadfast and sincere fidelity. And thou, O Jesus, who in thy life wast so constant and so faithful, come forward in this exigency to the aid of my determinations. Let thy sufferings impart to me strength, and thy glorification encouragement, rightly to perform all that thou hast appointed to me, and to continue faithful to thee even down to the grave.

JULY 8.

The Benefit of Faith and of Confidence in God.

DID I not know that God reigns, and that this God is my Creator and my Father, I could not fail to commence each new day of my life with sorrow and despair. I should see before me sufferings which seemed to admit no comfort; I should discover frailties in which I could expect no aid; I should be forced to fear death without being able to anticipate a better life beyond it. Were there not a God, and were not this God my reconciled Father, it would be a misfortune to bear the shape of man, and to live would be to me a punishment.

But, praise and thanks be therefore to the Lord! I know that God exists, I know in whom I believe, whom I venerate, and in whom I ought to place my whole reliance. And that I know my God and believe in him, this is my happiness in life and in death; it is even to-day my heart's consolation and joy, the support of my courage, and the strength of my hope.

Infinite, O God, is thy power to aid and to protect, to reward and to avenge. How comfortable is this belief to me, when I consider my own imbecility, the helplessness of all my fellow-creatures, and the wickedness of the ungodly! What can indeed be wanting to me what can injure me, if thou, the Almighty, blessest and protectest me?—My existence may be interwoven with as many wonderful and incomprehensible events as its space is capable of containing: I know that thou art holy, and that thou wilt, as the patron and promoter of all that is good, bring every change and revolution of things to a wise conclusion. Let then the most melancholy experience of the falsehood and infidelity of men still further continue to wound my heart: it is enough that I know that thou art the true and unalterably faithful God, whose promises stand rock-fast, and whose word never deceives. Is the world deaf to me, does even my best friend shut his heart against me? how do I rejoice that thou vouchsafest, O God, to incline thine heart to me, and that thou art full of mercy, favour, and love towards me. Wherefore should I not place in thee my reliance? Wherefore shouldst thou not be my comfort and my joy? Yes, Lord, it shall be my delight to believe in thee, my endeavour shall it be to fear thee and love thee, and my greatest happiness to live to thee and die to thee. With these sentiments, thy exalted attributes, which would otherwise overwhelm me with fearfulness and distress, will become the source of my comfort and my contentment. Though the whole world tremble at thy might, I shall rejoice in thy strength. When the impious quake at the idea of thy omnipresence and omniscience, I shall be glad that thou art near me and knowest my cares. When thy truth appears terrible to thy foes, it will cheer me under all thy mysterious dispensations.

When the ungodly are compelled to despair at the recol-

lection of thy righteousness, I shall dare to congratulate myself on that same righteousness, which has become so soothing to me through the redemption of Jesus. These consolations will spread blessing and grace over my whole life, and produce for me under all circumstances and vicissitudes, tranquillity and hope. Lord, enliven through thy Spirit this hope in my heart, and let me for ever have confidence in thy goodness. Display it to me then also when I shall depart from this life; and transport me for the sake of Jesus into that realm of felicity where I shall better know thee, and then likewise love and praise thee more perfectly and more worthily.

JULY 9.

The manifold Failings and Diseases of the Soul and Body.

When I reflect that every folly, every error, and every sin is a dangerous malady of the soul; the world appears to me like an immense hospital, in which innumerable patients lie crowded together. As we can say to ourselves that we are everywhere encompassed by death, so may we likewise assert, that we are completely surrounded by the diseased, who suffer either in soul or in body, or in both at once. This is an important lesson for me who am actually in the company of these unfortunate beings, and experience in myself that which I remark with regret in so many thousands. I am perhaps still sound in constitution, or, to speak more properly, the disorder which already sprang up with me at my conception still riots in concealment. But how soon may its flame burst forth, since the materials are already provided! How soon may these limbs lose their motion, my blood its circulation, and my whole body its vital energy! And do I not really feel all the indications of that great change which my corporeal frame must one day undergo? Where is that energy, that fire, that blooming aspect and force of nerve, which but a few years ago I possessed? I feel every day new and never-before-experienced sensations, which render it only too certain to me that I am perishable, and with all my

consciousness of health, a sick man, who without knowing or suspecting it, is advancing every day nearer to his final and total decay.

And those very evidences, in which my body instructs me, the state of my soul permits me also to discover. When I am attentive to all the alterations which take place within me, with what sorrow do I then perceive the almost careless frailty and indisposition of my spirit. In all the faculties of my soul there reigns a highly lamentable supineness, and uncertainty and doubt predominate in my understanding. How erroneous are my conceptions of that which is truly good or hurtful! And yet how just and correct might they be, if I made use of the light which shines upon me! How deficient are my notions of God and his perfections! How little am I acquainted with myself or with the world which I inhabit! How corrupt are my apprehensions, how erroneous my fancy, and how unsound my entire mode of thinking! How perverse are my inclinations, how little under control are my propensities! How sinful are my passions! How averse is my whole heart to virtue! How unhealthy is my whole soul! And yet how healthful might it be, if I always listened to the Divine voice which speaks within me!

O! therefore is Solomon's holy prayer to-day mine: "Lord, grant to me a wise heart!" Take away from me my numerous foibles and defects; remove away from me the folly and the perversity of my heart, and endue me with a new spirit. Then if it please thee, let also the dwelling which thou hast for a time appointed to my soul in this body, be supported by thy mighty efficacy. Give me strength even in this world to fulfil the views which thou hast destined for me. Yet should it not be conformable to thy will and to my real welfare, that thou shouldst hearken to this latter petition, then preserve only my soul sound and unspotted, that it may continue blameless before thee till the day of the coming of Jesus Christ. Let therefore my greatest industry be directed to the end, that through thy grace I may keep a good conscience, and through faith in my Redeemer become worthy to attain to that life in heaven, in which soul and body, in the most beautiful and happiest harmony, will enjoy thee, O thou living God

JULY 10.

The Christian's Boast.

I AM a Christian:—this is the first thought which at the rise of the present day shall possess my whole soul, shall gladden it, exalt it, and strengthen it; for it comprehends in itself all that in this world constitutes my happiness and in the next my blessedness.—I am a disciple of the tender Master who invited to him the weary and the heavy-laden, and refreshed them. O! how must I bless that hour in which I was made a participator in such precious welfare! I entered into the world as a man who had no claim on those possessions which form the real felicity of the human race. Sin was my inheritance, the curse of sin my reversion:—and thou, most gracious Jesus, thou didst withdraw this curse, and this iniquity from me, and didst render me a holy and blessed child of thy Father. I became a Christian, and through this desirable change, an heir of eternal life. What can now surpass my happiness? What can debase my worth?

I am a Christian. The wise may vaunt of their wisdom, the strong of their strength, the rich of their wealth. To be a Christian exceeds all the glory of the earth. When the wise fall into foolishness; when the strong are taught to feel their imbecility; when the rich sink into their primitive necessity; the Christian remains changeless in his wisdom, in his power, and in his riches. But if the happiness of a Christian is so inestimably great, ah! why do I not strive to be really that which I am called? why do I not act according to the persuasion which I entertain of the dignity of my vocation?

My soul must, however, no longer mistake its own value! I will from this day forward behave more consistently with my calling. In me the world shall perceive how nobly a Christian thinks, and with what uprightness he regulates his actions. The idea that I am a Christian shall be the guide of my entire conduct, and fill my heart with high inclinations. When the world would seduce me with its charms and its enticements, I will remember that these attractions are too mean for a Christian who hastens to a better exist-

ence. I am a Christian:—will I say to those who would allure me to become faithless to my Redeemer:—how can I forsake him who has purchased me so dearly, and whom I am bound to follow by such solemn obligations? I am a Christian: how can I be ashamed of Jesus and his doctrine? I am a Christian:—how can I labour extravagantly for earthly advantages, since Jesus has assured me of higher and imperishable gifts? I am a Christian:—how can I shun those afflictions which I am bound to endure by such inviolable engagements of duty, and by such powerful encouragement? I am a Christian:—how can I be terrified at death, which will fully clear up my destiny, and make my felicity complete.

Thus to act and thus to think, embrace the decisive points of a Christian's life. But how much at difference with this disposition of mind have I hitherto lived? It is thy grace, O Jesus, which must qualify me, so that in the future period of my days I may act more righteously and more worthily.

JULY 11.

The Love and Charity of Jesus.

Amid the want of affection which the world exhibits, I find consolation in the remembrance of the philanthropy of Jesus, and in the hope that his great example will ever excite emulation, and constantly gain new votaries to brotherly love. When I contemplate the life of my Saviour, I discern in what the most noble-minded philanthropy consists. All his doctrines, his entire conversation, all his intercourse, his sufferings, his death, all, all was love. And even though I had not those great proofs of his esteem for the human kind which exhibit him sacrificing his life and his happiness to the good of the world, yet still would his instructions be sufficient to convince me of his magnanimous love. The essential summary of his precepts is the most impressive recommendation of love. How gently does he speak to the sinner! How condescendingly does he discourse with the wretched! How affectionate are his exhortations! How strong and influential are his motives of comfort!

But much though his language and his doctrine may delight, yet his actions are still far more transporting. His business in the world was benevolence. No place was so distant that his love did not prompt him to journey thither. No man was so low that he did not bemean himself towards him. No wretch was so despicable that he did not move him to pity. No hardship, no toil, no sufferings, were too great for his charity to undertake when he could render men happy. O! with what humanity and loveliness must his countenance have shone, when he took up the little ones in his arms, and blessed them! Who can describe that compassionate patience with which he bore the imperfections of his friends? Who can pourtray that sympathy of heart with which he took an interest in the wants of his brethren? Who is not amazed at that mildness which, under the cruellest persecution, he displayed towards his foes?

But astonishment and admiration must not be the only effects which so grand a pattern produces within me. I must be of the same mind and temper as Jesus: he has bequeathed to us an example, that we may imitate his excellence. And how many occasions of performing this duty may not my intercourse with men afford me! I enter daily into the society of those who have a right to claim from me offices of love. I must then prove by my whole conduct, that I am a disciple of that divine philanthropist whose name I profess. In me men must behold how well adapted is the religion of Jesus to form true friends to the human race. But, O Jesus, do thou thyself inspire my heart with the pure impulses of charity. Work in me a pitying sympathy in the necessities of my brethren; an affectionate zeal to assist them and adhere to them in their tribulation. Let me, wherever opportunity offers itself, be ready to do good, and even in spite of the unthankfulness of the world become not weary of my sacred office. With such sentiments I shall thus, likewise, secure pleasure to myself. I shall obtain the exalted title of the benefactor of men; but, what is of unutterably higher account, I shall be designated thy friend, and rest secure of thy love. And if I have this assurance, then will my felicity, both in this and in the other world, be great beyond conception.

JULY 12.

All God's Dispensations are good.

"The Lord has made all things well!" With what emotion have I frequently uttered this confession, when I was taught by immediate experience, that God executes his counsels gloriously! That which all heaven repeats and the whole world publishes, I must also acknowledge in regard to my own life: "The Lord has made all things well!" But how ashamed am I, when I compare this declaration with my former complaints! When the Lord humbled me, when he saw that it would be profitable for me that he should lead me in a wonderful way, and for a time withdraw from me his countenance, how faint-minded and dispirited did I then become! how little could I convince myself that all that God does is well done! But now that the darkness of his paths is dispelled, now that God has again restored to me a clear and serene day, now I am constrained, with as much confusion as conviction, to own that God has made all well! This experience which my past life has provided for me, must render me wise for the future. A number of vicissitudes will occur during my existence, under which doubt will arise in my soul of the wise and gracious providence of God. I may fall into situations and circumstances in which I shall argue in my heart: "How! can I also say of these events, that God has made all well?" But here is the occasion for me to show my faith and my confidence. Here it becomes at once my duty and my comfort to reflect on the former instances of the guidance of God, and to consider their wisdom and goodness. And if I only dwell for a little on this consideration, so shall I be forced even in the most dubious emergencies to exclaim: "God has made all well, yea, even with me!"

It is indispensably necessary to my own peace of mind, that this dependence on the all-directing goodness of God should live in me and reign in me. The more intimately I am persuaded that all the views of God are benevolent and wise, the more tranquil will be my heart, the more contented my whole life, and the more prosperous my days. Implant to this end, thou perfectly good Being, a firm faith in my

soul, and more and more eradicate that distrust which is so natural to my corrupted heart. Give me enlightened eyes to see the wonders of thy mercy, and replenish me with sentiments of gratitude, that I may extol thy goodness. No day can leave me richer in bliss than that which I devote to thy glorification and to the contemplation of thy infinite knowledge. Yes, let it be my most favourite duty in all things to ascribe to thee the honour, to praise thy famous name on the earth, and to boast of thy marvels. But especially grant me the grace to worship thee through my life, and through my uprightness to make evident the love which is due to thee, O Lord of my Salvation! Full of joyful confidence do I resign myself anew to thy gracious guidance. Whatever be the destiny which thou decreest to me, it shall be pleasant, if only thou withdrawest not from me thy blessing and thy help. And I will further, through thy grace, exercise myself in the hard duty, even then to hope in thee, when thou hidest thy face, and to acknowledge the wisdom of thy governance, even when it appears to me unjust or destructive. Thy doings are far beyond all that we either pray for, hope, or understand.

JULY 13.

Praise and Adoration of Jesus.

To know, O Jesus, how much thou hast loved us, and yet not to praise thee, would be the most unjustifiable ingratitude. What could I allege to excuse my insensibility? What regard could I expect if I should suppress within me every feeling of thankfulness? How must heaven detest me; heaven that is incessantly employed in glorifying the Redeemer of the world! All the seraphim unite in the service and celebration of the exalted Jesus. And the earth, this so highly-favoured earth, dares to be mute? Man refuses to join in the thanksgiving songs of the angels? No; the whole world must be filled with thy fame: all men, and all the tribes of the earth must be made to confess that thou art the Saviour and the Redeemer of the human race? Yes,

a million offerings of praise rise this morning on high to thee: innumerable voices with one accord ascribe to thee thanks and honour: sighs, not to be expressed, ascend to heaven. Thou universal Saviour of Man, contemn not the grateful prayers of thy redeemed. Though they are exceedingly imperfect, still let them please thee. Attend not to the mean words with which we seek to laud thee; but look into our hearts, those hearts which longingly wish to worship thee with the pæans of the angels. All languages are too poor to recount thy love; all wisdom is too insufficient to comprehend the wonders of thy mercy; all rapture is too weak to convey an idea of the joy which thy atonement has produced; all eloquence is too feeble to describe thy astonishing merit and thy unheard-of affection; nay, even the thanksgiving hymns of eternity exhaust not the theme of the amazing tenderness which thou hast manifested to the world. Now then listen, amid the incompetent homage which the heavens and the earth pay to thee, listen to the faltering applause of one of thy ransomed followers! Thou, who dwellest amid the hosannas of the celestial spirits, give heed to the voice of a being whom thou through thy deserts has elevated to angelic happiness. I will praise thee and magnify thy name, thou Saviour of all the inhabitants of the lands of the earth! As often as I turn my thoughts back to the misery out of which thou hast snatched me; as often as I contemplate the blessed situation in which thou hast placed me through thy love; as often as I anticipate the immortality which thou hast obtained for me, will I present to thee praise, thanks, and adoration.

O! that I could here assemble all thy rational creatures around me, and infuse into them that love, that veneration, with which I, thou most Holy One, revere thy divine character and thy great work. Be my behaviour the means through which I may promote thy honour, thou friend of the children of mortality! O! that it may be made visible to me every day, how powerful thy grace, O Jesus, is to subdue the corruption of my heart! And to this thy almighty grace I now solemnly yield myself up. O thou who hast procured for me blessings on all the days of my life, let me not pass this day unblessed. Thou knowest all my necessities better than I can relate them to thee: thou under-

standest all my wishes afar off. O do thou then satisfy my bosom, and let me find in thee all that can screen my sins, ensure my repose, and confirm my perpetual felicity.

JULY 14.

Acknowledgment of Divine Favours.

Amid the thanks which I feel myself indebted to the Supreme Being, am I mindful of the benefits which I experienced at my birth and in my infancy? How many memorials might I find to remind me of this duty! Every morning, on which I am gifted anew with life, might bring to my recollection that hour when thou, my Creator, didst first bestow on me my existence. Each weak, helpless child might lead back my thoughts to my own early feebleness and inability to assist myself. So many of the unfortunate surrounding me, who are tempted to execrate the moment when they beheld the light, or are at least compelled to mourn over it, might place before my eyes the happiness of my own lot. But do my pride and my inattention allow me to think well of those favours, and return thanks for them to God? Alas! I must confess, that I forget nothing sooner than the tokens of God's kindness. I scarcely remember yesterday's manifestations of grace. How then can I be strong in the memory of those which occurred twenty or more years ago? And still it remains one of my most incumbent obligations to revert to my days of childhood, and there to search out the traces of God's providence. O! what an astonishing number of blessings shall I then perceive have been conferred upon me!

The period of my birth is itself worthy of consideration. It arose from no blind chance that I was born exactly at that time when my life was bestowed upon me, and at no other. What a blessing is it for me that I was not born in an age when idolatrous ignorance and superstition still reigned, but in the happy era in which God has spread the universal light of truth and knowledge over the earth! The place also of my birth claims my reflection and my thanks; for

how deserving of pity should I have been, if the land of my birth had been appointed among a savage, barbarous, or infidel people! But that God allowed me to be born on a spot, where I can dwell among civilized men, and enjoy the blessings of Christianity, how highly favoured ought I on this account to deem myself!—Yet further, if I bethink me of the wonderful manner in which thou, O God, hast conducted me, of the love with which thou didst inspire my parents and friends to take an interest in me; and if I call to recollection the dangers out of which thy strong arm has rescued me; I must be struck with admiration at the magnitude of thy goodness, and involuntarily break forth into thy praise.

With such extraordinary proofs of thy benevolent providence, how culpable should I be were I to put the slightest distrust in thy governance! No; the blessings of my past days shall serve as an incitement to prompt me also in the future to rely upon thy almighty beneficence. When I am buried in sorrow, and when cares oppress my heart, I will think of the faithfulness with which thou didst guard my feeble infancy, and remove from me so many disasters. How is it possible that I should not confide in thee, thou All-highest, and with joyous affiance place my hope in thee, and commend to thee all my ways? Didst thou so fondly consult for my well-being, while I was yet so powerless and frail; so will I trust to thy benignity, that thou wilt still deign to me thy protection. In this hope do I now commence the new course of my existence. Refuse not to me thy aid, and deprive me not of thy grace.

JULY 15.

Parallel between the Pains and Pleasures of Life.

Recreations in thousand-fold variety has the fartherly hand of my God provided for me, through which the burdens of my earthly pilgrimage are lightened; and though I must indeed every day experience the evils of life, and though every day brings its peculiar troubles, yet even in these the wisdom of God is made visible. I recognise even in the cares of my

existence the goodness of my kind Parent, whose will it is to conduct me through suffering to eternal joys; I should therefore be contented with my fate. But my dissatisfied heart ever excites me studiously to compute the sum of my uneasiness, and in this calculation I generally overlook the balance of pleasantness. I complain of toilsome days, and mention not the sweets of the night. I am displeased with the enfeeblement and fatigue of the body through labour, but consider not the refreshment and the restoration which arise from sleep. I grieve myself at the falsehood and unsociableness of the world, and reflect not what a favour the Lord has shown to me in granting to me true friends. This perversity of mind is common to the whole human race, but it is also the source of that murmuring and fretfulness which is spread over the earth.

Cease, O man, to accuse the governance of God. Look around thee, and see how the Deity has ordered all things for thy tranquillity and for the alleviation of thy hardships; how he has permitted so many beauteous flowers to spring up for thee among the thorns! He has embodied innumerable qualities in the productions of his creation, which have no other object than to afford solace to us, unworthy creatures. He causes bread to grow out of the earth; he hangs round the vine with grapes, and the trees he loads with their fruits; he adorns the earth with verdure and flowers; he gives command to his sun to warm us, and to the rains to descend in reviving showers. All, all is formed to contribute its share to our convenience, or our pleasure.

Heaven and earth, O God, subsist for my service with all their hosts and glory. Wherever I turn my eyes the blessings of the Divinity are there. Animal and vegetable, hill and dale, forest and sea, are the obedient ministers of my food and my joys.

This day also will these delights and these recreations be my portion amid the wearisomeness of life; this day also shall I both see and taste how good the Lord is. O! that I were as attentive to his munificence as I am studious of the augmentation of my own woe, by carefully remarking and noting all the grievances and disquietudes of life. Lord, grant me a composed, quiet, and thankful heart. My soul must not be so sorely cast down as to forget the graciousness

of its God. In all the occurrences of my earthly destiny, let me, O Lord, be strengthened by the remembrance of thy wise benevolence, and even prize it as goodness, when it pleases thee to bring me low through afflictions. It remains, once for all, my appointment while I continue here, to struggle with uneasiness and strife. But a time shall come, when my fate will unfold itself, and through thy mercy I shall arrive, thou Prince of Peace, at perfect happiness and felicity, and no more feel the vicissitudes of gratification and pain, but enjoy thy goodness in eternity.

JULY 16.

The Spirit and Grace of God implored against Sin.

How replete with consolation is the belief that the All-good listens to the prayers of his children, and that each of their cares is known to him. Let this become to me to-day a sweet comfort for my troubled soul; let it enliven my hope, let it assuage my sorrow. Yes; I proclaim with thankful heart thy goodness, O my God, in granting to me this day likewise the opportunity of addressing thee, and in imparting to me the rapturous assurance, that by thee I shall be heard. I praise thy grace that thou still sparest to me space for repentance, and time for reflection; and still constantly promotest my spiritual improvement. I should have deserved, through my own conduct, that thou shouldst have sealed up thy ear against my entreaties, and for ever denied me thy favour; I perceive and acknowledge, with deepest humility, that I owe it to thy mercy alone, that I am what I am. To the operation of thy Spirit must I ascribe it, that I now prostrate myself before thee in devotion. Thou hast brought my soul to such a state that it has formed the resolution to abominate sin and devote itself wholly to thee. Praised be for this thy pitying grace!

For now first, since I have emoraced this intention and begun to carry it into practice, now first can I enjoy life, can I feel the beauties of thy world, and regard the future with the cheerfulness of hope. That which hitherto imbittered every

pleasure, robbed me of the possession of every happiness, and disturbed every hope, was my depressing conscience, and the thought of my guiltiness. But will this agreeable sensation of amendment never again leave me? Shall I indeed remain unalterably true to my good purposes? Or must I not dread my own inconstancy? Thou knowest best, thou Omniscient, how perverse my heart is, and how weak are my worthiest determinations! I have, alas! often already broken my vows and abandoned the good way on which I had entered. I have as often promised amendment and afterwards again transgressed, as though I had sought nothing else through my promises than repeated permission to offend. Ere, therefore, I again consecrate myself to thee as thy exclusive possession by another sacred protestation, I will prove my heart and examine whether my present inclinations be indeed the effects of firm conviction and sincerity of mind: I will flee to thee, my God, and implore thee for the support of thy Spirit, that I may be strong for goodness both in will and performance.

Replenish my heart with thy grace, and thy Spirit; and confirm me in faith. Let all good thoughts within me come to maturity, and all pious purposes be fulfilled. Then may I be assured that thou wilt attain in me thy affectionate views. Thou wilt rule over me with blissful favour, and finally crown all my meritorious designs with the most prosperous success. O! how shall I, when I shall hereafter become in heaven thy own for ever, exult in the day in which I resigned myself up to thee as thy property.

JULY 17.

The Duty of loving God.

If this be love to God, that we keep his commandments, and if these commandments be not hard to him who from his heart loves God, O! then how happy and how wise should I be if the love of God filled my heart! My eye would then look up with the most believing confidence to the Lord. My ear would be attentive to his voice. My soul would present to him its daily prayers. All my powers would be employed

to perform God's will, and my soul would be penetrated with the most earnest desire to become united with this Divine Being. No sacrifice, however great it might be, would appear too large for me to offer with pleasure to my Creator. My thoughts would constantly be busied with this delightful object; the remembrance of him would render solitude agreeable to me, preserve me in the tumult of the world, augment my happiness, and console me in misfortune. In life this love would govern me; in death it would cheer me; and in eternity it would render me blessed.

Adorable Being! O! wherefore do I not love thee thus ardently, but rob myself of such blessings? How pleasantly would my days have flown if I had transferred to thee that love which I have cast away on the worthless things of the world! How little did all these, and even the most amiable of them, merit my esteem! Had I but had a lively perception of those claims of love which are combined in thee, how contemptible should I have esteemed all besides! Thou, O God, art the only being, either in heaven or on earth, which is of infinite worth and of infinite superiority. Thou alone possessest the means of rendering me eternally happy. Teach me thyself to contemplate thy inexpressible perfections, thy attributes, and thy grace, in Christ Jesus. Fill me with the noble delight which arises from the consideration of thy greatness, and let it be my endeavour to love thee above everything.

I incessantly wish that I might become happy. But how can this be accomplished when there is no love for thee in my heart; when I do not find my gratification in obeying thy laws; when thy approbation is not dearer to me than everything else, and the sole aim of my efforts? And how can I love my brethren if I do not love thee? As thy creatures, as thy children, they ought indeed to be dear to me and beloved: I ought to love them because thou lovest them. So much the more will I therefore, now muster all my powers, have recourse to every measure, and employ all my time to become more perfect in thy love. Thy love shall alike regulate both my less important employments and my more momentous concerns in this world. Maintain and establish my heart, O God, in these sentiments, so long as I live, till I arrive in thy presence, where I shall for ever rest in thy love.

JULY 18.

The Beauties of early Morning.

O! how many pass this morning in slumber and inactivity, and feel not those exalted emotions which the spectacle of the morning sun produces in the sensible bosom! None of all those wonders which each dawn presents to the admiration of the observant mind can touch their hardened hearts, and awake their souls from sleep. They live without being aware of it: the sun enlightens them without their regarding either his efficacy or his pomp; all nature stands embellished before them, without their remarking her marvellous beauty; every breathing thing is emulous to manifest its joy and its transport; but they only, these insensible, ungrateful souls, they only are unmoved and mute amid all the united invitations of the whole creation to joy. O! what rapturous scenes does the curtain of nature now rise to unfold! The sun exhilarates and beautifies everything with its rays. Millions of living creatures awake and employ themselves in proclaiming, in their artless songs, ecstasy and thanks. Every field and meadow glisten with sparkling dewdrops. All the flowers renew their verdure, raise themselves erect from the ground, and disclose their loveliness and splendour. The trees, which from yesterday's heat hung their heads bowed down to the earth, rear again their foliage and majestic branches aloft. What a spectacle of indescribable beauty is this to my eyes!

Sleep on, ye insensible men! I will rouse myself to the praise of my Creator! I will employ this moment, in which all the works of nature glorify their Maker, to mingle, likewise, my worship and my devotion with their offerings. I will here lie down with my face on the earth, and adore the Lord, who gives to the whole world, and to me also, life and welfare. Inexpressible eternal God! What are these beauties to the pre-excellence of thy Being! What is the sun to the brilliancy of that light in which thou dwellest! What are all the charms of the domains of nature to the pleasantness of thy love! What am I!—what are all creatures in comparison with thy immeasurable greatness! Lord, I confess that I am nothing but a dream that

rapidly flits away. But thou remainest perpetually that which thou wast when as yet there was no sun, no morning, no summer! And thou wilt even remain the same when no sun shall illuminate, no summer shall ravish me.

Eternal, invariable Being! to thee I betake myself for refuge, since I see how vain and how inconstant is all around me. All the beauties of this summer's day, which now so enchant me, how soon, alas! will they be vanished! How unfortunate should I be, if with the charms of nature my joys also had an end! Every gratification which I experience carries me back to thee, the Giver of all joys! Let every blade of corn, every bird, and every particle of sand, teach me to find thee and to feel thy friendship. That I may rejoice for ever, thou, O God, shalt be my joy and my delight. Then all things may change and become steril and dreary! I will still rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in God my Saviour.

JULY 19.

Care for the Life to come.

If I have nothing more to hope for than this life; if for me everything terminates with my life, then will I enjoy this brief period, and by indulging in every possible gratification, render it as agreeable as I can; for to-morrow, perhaps, I may be dead. But, if a second life follows this—if I possess not merely a mortal body, but also an immortal soul—if this soul is to become eternally happy through faith and godliness, then there lies upon me, besides the care of this life, another and more weighty concern, namely, solicitude about that better existence which, through Christ, I expect beyond the grave. Is it wisely done of me to set my worldly affairs in order, because I may suddenly be carried off by death?—then ought I to be equally wise for eternity. I will, therefore, to-day, begin to think with earnestness on my salvation, and seize each opportunity of becoming more closely and more intimately acquainted with God and Jesus. To-day will I take to heart the importance of God's grace and his glorious promises. To-day will I employ my precious

time and its opportunities in doing his will. To-day will I examine my heart whether it be so disposed that I dare hope always to live with the holy God and with Christ. To-day will I watch over myself, that I may commit nothing through which I may forfeit my eternal blessedness. For to-morrow, perhaps, the day of my death and of judgment will come rapidly over me; to-morrow, I must, perhaps, appear before my Judge, and be terrified at his countenance.

God has surrounded me with images of mortality, in order that I may never forget that I am doomed to die. But still how little am I heedful of the uncertainty and the swiftness of my life; how readily do I abandon myself to my carelessness, which may yet perhaps destroy my everlasting salvation. The sensation of health, and the view of so many of the aged, and of those whose days are verging to the widest span, that still flourish in vigour and life, encourage me in the hope that for me too God has appointed a late termination of my mortal career. But though I had the certainty that my life would still continue for seventy or ninety years, how little would this justify me in my negligence! For, ah! how speedily do months and years elapse! and how wisely must he lay out his time who would depart with joy into the life of retribution! This will I earnestly consider both to-day, and on every future day which God sends to me: my walk shall henceforth be in heaven, that death may not be to me a messenger of terror but of peace, and that the hope of a blessed immortality may cheer my last hours, and sweeten my separation from the earth.

JULY 20.

False Estimate of the Means of Happiness.

Impotent man that I am, daily do I experience that all my endeavours to avert dangers or to make myself happy are fruitless, if God himself does not accomplish both! No day elapses in which I receive not proofs of this. How anxious am I often to turn aside from me all the misfortunes which may, perhaps, overtake me: how do I rejoice that they are

still far from me, when already they stand at my gate! How often do I fancy that I am secure from all oppressions, that I am protected against all attacks, that I am armed against all changes of fortune, and, lo! I become ultimately a prey to misery! So little, with all my care and my efforts, have I it in my power to secure myself from wretchedness and adversity, when I am abandoned to my own charge. But yet less is it in my power to render myself prosperous, and to make my well-being lasting. There are innumerable obstacles which add difficulty to the attempt, and even make it impracticable, and a thousand accidents which may frustrate all my toil.

The truth of this reflection I every day experience; and yet how willingly do I listen to the flattering idea that merely through my own industry and skill I may arrive at life's highest felicity! Sometimes it is my wisdom, through which I hope to search into the ways of Providence, to penetrate the future, and to discover the means and the summit of happiness. Sometimes it is my power, my influence, my riches, through which I purpose to make my temporal success permanent. Sometimes it is cunningly contrived plans, which shall gain for me a future prosperity. Sometimes it is my friends, through whose assistance I expect happiness and advancement. And, at last, when I have exerted all, suffered all, devised all, that I deem needful for my welfare, I find, to my sorrow, that my wisdom, my power, my own efforts, and the endeavours of my friends, are alike vain and profitless. And what do I then do? I complain of the hardness of my fate, though I ought far rather to accuse my own folly and unbelief.

O! wherefore should I longer occasion to myself so much uneasiness and concern? No; it must become my resolution with the beginning of a new day, excluding all other concerns, to rest my confidence in God, and from him to expect all happiness and all protection. This hope will never disappoint me. With God I shall, under all circumstances and under all changes, find that happiness, which I have in vain sought in myself and in the whole world. Now, then, will I, in firm faith, be resigned to thee, the all-wise and bountiful Creator. The more I perceive, from day to day, my own weakness, the more confidently will I rely on thy omnipo-

tence. The more proofs I obtain of the unfriendliness of the world, the more replete with comfort shall thy kindness be to me. The more bounded my knowledge is, and the more feeble my understanding, the more will I depend on thy infinite intelligence. What contentment, what tranquillity will then be mine, amid all the vicissitudes of fortune; and how cheerful, how comforted in hope shall I then become! What consolation shall I thus feel in prosperity, and what support in adversity! Affected and transported, I shall thank thy name, and proclaim thy beneficence, O Lord, who art my confidence.

JULY 21.

The true Importance of Life.

THUS long have I already lived: thus, many a morning, have I received the gift of renovated life; but how rarely have I reflected maturely on the exceeding value of my existence. The consciousness of my own weakness and infirmities, and the frequent view of my brethren bending beneath the oppression of sickness, teach me, indeed, the precious value of life. Through the carefulness with which I seek to keep disease and death at a distance from me, I also render visible my deeply-implanted love of vital enjoyment. But then I never regard my life in a right view; I only consider it in connexion with this world, of which I am to be merely a passing guest, and not in the important reference which it has to eternity. And yet this is the side on which life first appears of real moment. Do I contemplate life thus, then every year, every day, every hour, which I spend in the world, constitutes a serious portion of my appointed time.

Be this meditation, therefore, my employment on the present morning. Many now again awake, who may never once have bethought themselves that they live; I, however, will thankfully feel what a happiness has occurred to me, that God has prolonged my life. Many of my fellow-creatures will dedicate their morning thoughts only to the scheming of idle plans for their temporal futurity; I, however, will prosecute

that train of ideas which extends beyond this brief term of terrestrial residence, and secures to me the happiness of eternity.

Never can I, with sufficient earnestness, recollect that I am destined for eternity, and that here already this earthly existence forms, in some measure, a part of that eternity which shall commence on yon further shore of the grave. And to this change shall the tendency of all my wishes, all my thoughts, all my actions, all my designs, and all my hopes be directed. It shall prove the criterion by which I judge of everything, that I either desire or avoid. And as eternity is now my earliest consideration, so shall it, during this whole day, be my predominant and favourite reflection.

In order to elevate myself to this happy condition of mind, I will institute a rational estimate of those objects which will this day present themselves to me. Yonder are riches which allure my affection to themselves: but do I then live to become rich? Here are joys of the senses, after which my heart longs: but is it only to riot in these that I exist? Yonder are renown, honour, and rank: but can it be the scope of my life to strive after possessions which disturb the peace of the bosom and excite the fury of the passions? Here are gratifications without number: but am I born only to indulge myself in pleasure? or can I, amid these delights, attain my destination? O God, I supplicate thee, make me wise for eternity, and grant that this wisdom may sanctify and regulate all my doings. Thus shall I be able, at every fleeting moment of my life, and at the close of each rapidly hastening day, to exclaim: "Praise be to God! another step to eternity is completed; I am so much nearer to the end of my life, and the beginning of my perpetual felicity."

JULY 22.

Reflections on the Briefness, Vanity, and Toilsomeness of temporal Existence.

As often as with every new day I enter anew into the world, I obtain fresh experience of the vanity, the shortness, and

the toilsomeness of life. Would that this experience might be rightly efficacious, and render me wiser! It would be strange inconsiderateness, if on every repeated entrance into the world I should represent life to myself different from what it really is; if I should dream of a happiness and of enjoyments in my present existence, which are not to be found in it. But wisely should I behave, if every morning I pictured to myself the futility, the briefness of life, and its numerous pains, if I promised myself nothing more from it than I may actually venture to expect. In this manner I should arrive at such a state of mind, that I should neither be frightened nor fall into amazement at the spectacle of the afflictions of the flesh, whether in myself or in others I witnessed the misery of human existence. This would also be the means through which I should be able to attain moderation in the hours of prosperity, and patience in those of adversity.

Well, then, I will begin the new day with these considerations. I will represent to myself the shortness of my life. But I will not do this in order to distress myself with the image of death; I will do so to excite myself to make the most prudent use of this fugacious period, and to release myself from my ruinous attachment to the possessions and pleasures of the earth. Is it uncertain whether I shall outlive the next hour? O! how can I then waste the present one in indolent slothfulness or in wanton enjoyments? Is a lost hour an irrecoverable damage? I will then profit by every instant, and with prudent haste endeavour to perform the utmost possible good. I will represent to myself the grievousness of my life in its full extent. Alas! I shall even this day experience how perishable and necessitous of help my body is, and how much vain toil the support of existence costs me;—how much sweat and how many tears the wretchedness of this life extorts from me. I shall experience how nugatory all carnal possessions are; with what difficulty they are obtained, and when acquired how hard they are to preserve. I shall experience how corrupt my heart is, how sinful all my inclinations, and how feeble my powers. And all the rest of my experiences will only confirm the saying of the ancient patriarch: "Few and evil are the days of my life!"

O God, illuminate my understanding through this knowledge. Let it serve to render me ever more strictly united to thee, the eternal God! With so many means of instruction, I must no longer remain like an inconsiderate child, who is always learning, but never brings into practice that which he has learnt. Let me live like a sage, like a Christian, and employ every proffered occasion to become more perfect in wisdom and in the exercise of Christianity. Grant that the vanity of the world, the burdensomeness of life, and the scantiness of my days, may become for me a school of heavenly knowledge, and an incentive to use the world temperately, to love my life wisely, and to value nothing so highly as the eternity to which I am destined.

JULY 23.

Moderation to be observed in our Petitions to Heaven.

THERE were once, as the fable relates, two shepherds, who, after a long period of dry weather, prayed most suppliantly to heaven for water for themselves and their flocks. Their entreaties were at length heard. A deity descended in human form, at whose presence they were seized with fear and terror. But a soft and pleasant voice soon tranquillized them again. "Fly not," said the deity; "I come to bring you gifts which your own folly alone can render pernicious. Ye beg for water; I will grant it to you. But tell me first how much you desire: demand not rashly; and remember that too much may be as injurious as too little." The elder of the two shepherds approached with the deepest reverence to the deity, and said: "Kind and benignant being, pardon thy servant; I only petition thee for a moderate brook." "Be thy wish accomplished," replied the celestial; and immediately a spring gushed forth at the feet of the shepherd, and watered his fields. The other shepherd was neither so modest nor so easily satisfied. "I desire," he cried, "that thou pour the neighbouring river, with all its streams, through my plains." This request was also complied with. Its embankments instantly gave way, and the river spread itself abroad. But

the plantations were destroyed, the waves swept off the herds in their torrent, and the shepherd himself found at last his grave in the flood.

Do men in their prayers to God proceed more wisely than this senseless shepherd? How many pray for their own ruin, when they think that they have prayed for the greatest happiness of life. How many, for superfluity and opulence, or for honour, or carnal joys, and perceive not that they wish for things, the possession of which would render them unhappy were God to gratify their desire. How many thousands will probably this morning make such objects the subject of their petitions; and how wretched would they become, should God be pleased to hearken to them.

And what should I do, if God were so graciously to condescend to me, and leave to my own choice the favours which I might supplicate from him? Alas! I fear that I should select as inconsiderately and as foolishly. For how little do I yet know what is for my real advantage, or the proper value of things! How easily am I blinded by glittering exterior and false appearance; and how little do I perceive what may be profitable for me in an hour hence! O Lord, all-wise, benevolent Creator, teach me the wisdom to choose those things, the enjoyment of which I shall not have need to repent. And should I, through the lure of sensual things, be so dazzled as to supplicate from thee those blessings that might hereafter be prejudicial to me, then do not thou fulfil my prayer. Abandon me not to my own foolishness nor to the extravagant inclinations of my own will. What thy wisdom knows to be salutary for me, that vouchsafe to me; be it wealth or poverty, honour or disgrace, life or death. Grant me only, under all circumstances, an enlightened, satisfied heart, and so will everything, that thou dispensest to me, conduce to my peace. And for this grace I pray thee, in behalf of this day, and of every future day which thou hast determined to accord to me.

JULY 24.

God proclaimed both through the Natural and the Spiritual World.

When I reflect upon the greatness and the majesty of my God, how do I then feel myself transported into admiration, adoration, and joy; how then does the thought elevate and recreate my soul, that I belong to this exalted Being, that he looks upon me with a Father's love, directs my destiny with wisdom, guards me with his omnipotence, and deigns to bestow on me his good and gracious care! And how expressively does all that I see around me, and that I myself am, claim from me this reverential and grateful admiration of my God and Father! This rich and glorious aspect of nature that proffers to me her abundant gifts; this fair ball of earth that bears me; that glorious sun that gives me heat, and vivifies all that exists; these immeasurable heavens with their countless stars; this order and beauty which everywhere reign and predominate; all these combine to awaken the emotions of my heart. Wherever I cast my eyes, there I find God. The heavens recount to me the greatness of my Maker, and each of his creatures, even the smallest insect, teaches me how mighty and good the Lord is who formed it. In the minutest objects of nature, as in the most sublime appearances, my spirit discovers the magnitude of the Divinity, and all the productions of the earth appear to me as steps by which I elevate myself to the adorable God. And should this world—which is almost impossible—seem not sufficiently worthy of my admiration, yet will another world of wonders perpetually deserve my meditation and my thanks—the heavenly world which Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, hast opened to me. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creatures, the refulgence of the glory of the Father, and the essential semblance of his Being. What lofty and sacred emotions of an enrapturing love and admiration unite together here, when I contemplate my God in his works of nature, in his providence, and in the countenance of his Son, the ever-to-be-worshipped Jesus! To these sanctified occu-

pations now solemnly dedicate thyself, my soul, with pious love and upright zeal. How couldst thou now remain dispassionate and cold, when all nature invites thee, when the harvest-field with its blessings silently exhorts thee, to see and taste the friendship of God! No; every glance of heaven, and every contemplation of nature, must fill thee with veneration, love, and gratitude; must infuse into thee that sacred devotion which raises thee to blessed communion with the Lord. Mount by the ladder of the creatures to the Creator, who fills them all with plenty, and gives existence to every being. Let it prove thy most agreeable employment to search out the marks of goodness and power in thyself, and in the productions of his word, and over all wilt thou discover the Divinity; and when thou hast thus found God, thou wilt enjoy unutterable felicities, which shall make thy life pleasing, thy death gentle, and thy hope complete.

JULY 25.

Dignity and Value of the Christian Calling.

As often as I behold a fresh day of my life, and feel new vigour for the performance of good works, I receive at the same time a new obligation to dedicate my life to the Lord, and above all things to strive after his grace. As often as I approach to my Creator in prayer, and address him as my Father, I remember the value which is imparted to me as a disciple of Jesus Christ. O! that I might truly fulfil this calling, support this worthiness! A servant who has constantly present to himself the greatness of the master whom he serves, the importance of his office, the extent of his duties, and the reputation of heroic courage, will never occupy himself with things which may prove detrimental to his views. And if I earnestly consider how high in dignity is the Lord, whose name I bear, how infinitely momentous is my appointment, and how dear are the obligations of my Christian title, how zealously shall I then, likewise, under all circumstances study to perform my duties satisfactorily. Be it then even this morning my employment to consider the

greatness and the weight of my carthly vocation. This short and uncertain existence in the flesh is bestowed upon me in order to prepare me for that immutable life, into which death will carry me. Therefore ought my walk to be in heaven, and my wishes to be directed to that which neither perisheth nor passeth away.

I ought to regard the possessions of this earth only as the means of acquiring more estimable property, and only as such love them and use them: I ought to enjoy them as if I enjoyed them not, and possess them as if I possessed them not. I ought, when my duty requires it, to sacrifice every worldly advantage with firmness, as did my Saviour, man's divine friend. I ought to be zealous and indefatigable in the profession to which God has called me, and only in conscientious industry and active integrity seek my prosperity. I must never forget that I am an instrument of God's goodness and mercy in my station, when I pursue its offices in the zeal of charity. All this I ought to do in the spirit of Jesus Christ, and according to the principles of his doctrine. I ought so to act, because I can thus alone become worthy of God's grace, and be happy hereafter, and because such sentiments and such conduct are alone consistent with my rational and Christian rank.

O! that I could bear witness to myself that my disposition has hitherto been such, and my behaviour so conscientious, so faithful, so full of the fruits of human kindness! O! that I could boast, that I have always performed my professional duties with friendliness and love, always endured the burdens of my calling with courage and confidence, always laboured with zeal and assiduity! But I cannot give this testimony to myself; I cannot claim this renown. I must rather confess that truly my spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak, and that I have always avoided self-denial and self-conquest; I must confess that I often go to my daily vocation with disinclination and inward repugnance, and cannot master a certain indolence and disgust which prevent me from exerting myself with diligence and vigour.

The constant recollection of thee, thou omnipresent God, and of him whom thou didst send, that he might establish his glorious pattern before the face of the world, must from this day forward enliven my zeal and my fidelity, and infuse

into me resolution and boldness even for the most costly sacrifices. To become worthy of thy grace, must be my endeavour and my joy. I am a Christian! this thought must never leave me: how can I fail to find in this idea the strongest incitement and encouragement to do good without feeling weary, and to persevere even to the end.

JULY 26.

Morning Meditation a fit Preparation for the Duties of the Day.

WHAT are the thoughts and considerations by means of which I may place myself in that frame of mind which is best adapted to my vocations for the day, and which can best augment my fortitude for the difficulties and trials of life? Is it wisely done, if immediately on awaking from sleep, I occupy my soul with cares and projects relative to my earthly happiness, penetrate far into the future, and abandon myself to anxious apprehensions? Thoughts and considerations of this kind certainly do obtrude themselves upon my soul; but do they also confirm my repose, enliven my hope, strengthen my confidence? I rest under God's protection; his wise providence it is which orders my destiny, and directs the events of the world; my heart, indeed, still continues to beat, but it is the Lord alone who bestows on it the power by which it does so. Therefore will I employ my whole soul with the remembrance of the arbiter of my life, that it may be comforted and full of trust.

Eternal God, whether I move, stand still, sit, or lie down, I am everywhere under thy eyes. Thy heavens are over me, and the earth is thine. I live only through thy mercy. I shall lose myself wholly, if I reflect on the multitude of thy creatures: yet thou knowest me and providest for me as easily, surely, and as exactly, as if I were the only creature in the universe. My body, my soul, all the changes of my mortal state have an influence on the aggregate of the world: Oh! aid me, that according to my ability I may do as much good as I can. Thou hast formed me for thy honour and for felicity: be honour at all times by me ascribed to thee!

The experience of every single day strengthens my faith, and brings me new proofs of thy goodness. Of thousands of thy benefits, most kind Father, I cannot name one: but I expect an eternity, which alone will suffice to declare the wonders of thy grace.

Again I have received a great instance of thy favour. I doubted of a desired success: but thou hast brought my unbelief to shame, and convinced me that to thee all things are possible.

How many unobserved benefactions have vanished from before me with the fleeting moment! How prone is my thankless heart to forget thy deeds of tenderness! How much do I accumulate my own grief!

Through thee, Jesus, am I redeemed, that I may serve thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. This day also I owe to thee. Be it sanctified to thy service and to thy honour. Lead me, through thy Spirit, in the even path. Let me employ this day well, enjoy it innocently, and pass it so, that in the evening I may be glad in it. Would that I might but this day draw nearer to thee, O Jesus!

O God, I will love thee from my heart. Thou art the light and strength of all thy creatures. Thou teachest me to love all men as my brethren. Let me in suffering and pain, in happiness and distress, in all circumstances and vicissitudes, through intercession, beneficence, example, good counsel, and assiduity to assist and oblige, seek to become useful to my fellow-mortals. My last need will be composure and confidence at the close of my life. Ah! then think of me, my God! Thou, who hast hitherto guided me, forsake me not in that necessity. Be my support under the feebleness of my nature: be my pillar of fire when my eyes become dark! Be my life when I die, and throw open heaven to me when I awake from death.

JULY 27.

Recourse to God under Need and Affliction.

With the present day I enter into a world amid the disquiet and tumult of which the friendship and the love of my bre-

thren are indispensable to my living tranquilly and happily Their good counsel must often influence and guide me; their care must watch over me; their intercourse must inspire my heart with comfort and peace; their commiseration must often help to raise me up under my burdens, and their goodness to alleviate my sorrows. Without the aid and the affection of my fellow-pilgrims, my abode in this world would be doubly grievous. Yet the most tender love and the most disinterested officiousness of my friends will in certain cases contribute very little to my advantage. I will for once place myself, in thought, in some of those situations which may every day occur. What then, if I had either no friend, or if my friends, with every inclination to assist me, were too feeble to do so? How should I act under such circumstances? Nothing further would remain for me than that I should have recourse to that exalted and kind Friend who with his infinite wisdom is likewise powerful enough to carry into execution the designs both of that wisdom and of his goodness.

Well do the counsel and the support of trusty and skilful friends console me in my perplexities; but what is the counsel of the best-informed man in comparison to the decisions and the help of God? He, he only is great in counsel and great in deed. Can my friends guard me against injuries? the protection of the Almighty is a far surer refuge for me. Events may arrive, when my earthly friends must of necessity be separated from me; nay, innumerable disasters may destroy me before their eyes, while they stand looking on, powerless and unarmed for my rescue: but God is always with me; and as no danger is hidden from his sight, so is there likewise none so great out of which he cannot deliver me. Do I find in the society of my friends a pleasing gratification? intercourse with my God offers me far superior delight. Are they compassionate towards me in my miseries? the mercy of God is unbounded. In sickness, in pains, even in death itself, when all terrestrial friends are but poor comforters, he can cheer the soul and replenish it with divine joy. Do I expect from my brethren loving assistance in regard to my support? God is infinitely more able, and his bounty endureth for ever and ever.

Is God for me, who can be against me? In his friendship I would be satisfied, though I had not a friend on earth. Into

his bosom will I pour all my distresses and concern; to his counsel will I, under all accidents, resign myself, and trust in his goodness. But I will at the same time take pains also to form myself after him, and especially to love him. More particularly shall my faith be directed to Christ Jesus, through whom God is become my Father and my friend. In this his well-beloved, will God vouchsafe to me all that I can desire. And O! what blessings shall I this day obtain from the love and the friendship of my God and of Jesus. Yet this day will display to me only a small part of the streams that flow from this exhaustless fountain. But eternity, eternity will more perfectly unfold how indescribably blessed the man is who has God for his friend.

JULY 28.

God's Blessing Indispensable to Success in our Undertakings.

CERTAIN as it is, that without God's blessing all our efforts are to no purpose, little do I allow this truth to influence me. I am eager to be happy; I am anxious to remain sheltered from all want and poverty; I labour for this end; I strive and study to obtain the fruits of my toil; I allow no endeavour to tire me in order to hunt out a little advantage; I do all on my own part, through which I can promise myself success to my wishes:—Nevertheless all is in vain. And the saddest point for me is, that the further I think that I advance, the further I retrograde. The more tranquil and contented I hope to be, the more troubled and dissatisfied I become. While I hope to win, I lose. And whence arises all this? From my blindness. I reflect not that the blessing of God enriches without care. I reflect not that it is to no avail to rise early, to sit up late, and to eat the bread of carefulness, if the Almighty crowns not my solicitude. I do not remember that if the Lord buildeth not the house, the workmen build in vain; and that if the Lord defendeth not the city, the watchman keepeth watch in vain. In a word, I begin not by erecting my tower of felicity on the foundations of prayer and the fear of God.

I have, ere now, had many an experience of this folly in

my life. I should have been much happier, much more at ease, and much more contented, than I actually have been, if I had not selected false means. Why should I longer rob myself of my own felicity? Why should I yet longer uselessly pass my days in sorrow and concern? No; I will this day choose a sure way to make firm my happiness and quiet. My first office this morning shall be humbly to seek my retreat in the goodness and power of my God. O Lord, it is thy benevolent will that I should live happily and in peace. Make ready for me thyself this happiness and this peace which I shall nowhere find on earth. I will labour according to my strength, and promote the welfare of my brethren according to my ability. Withdraw not from me thy blessing, without which all my attempts and all my wishes continue barren. Let thy fear be perpetually before my eyes, without which the sweetest earthly blessing becomes a curse, and the happiest life a burden. I abandon myself wholly to thy providence, which will in me begin and finish its work. I will not, through my want of faith, raise obstacles to thy secret views, but follow with obedience the nod and signal of thy government. Thou wilt be my God, and accompany me in all my paths. Thou wilt fortify me and bless me. I trust to thy goodness and to thy truth, which have never left themselves without a witness. Guide me, according to thy counsel, and receive me at length into honour. Though thou shouldst yet conduct me by many ways that may appear thorny and disagreeable, still wilt thou at last lead me on the road that conducts to everlasting glory and changeless felicity.

JULY 29.

Prayer for Aid to renounce carnal Affections, and for Devotedness to God.

Most holy God! thou who fillest heaven and earth with thy presence, and hearest the pious prayers of thy children with approbation; let thy mercy also listen to me, though I am not worthy to approach thee! I have hitherto bent my

wishes only to terrestrial benefits, plunged myself deep in the cares and pleasures of this life, turned aside my mind from thee, and disregarded those true joys which the consciousness of thy grace affords. O! that it had been always my delight to adhere to thee, and to walk in thy ways! Now do I sincerely wish to tear myself loose from the world, to have intercourse with thee alone, and to spread before thee all my longings and desires. But the carnal gratifications and solicitudes in which I am so firmly entangled will, in despite of me, withdraw my thoughts from my good purpose, and avert my love from thee. My ideas wander from one idle object to another: my hope in thee sinks; my ardour for heavenly possessions cools; and my heart is far from thee, even when I adore thee with my lips.

Therefore be gracious to me, O God. Strengthen the fidelity of my heart, that it may wholly resign itself to thee and to thy love. Replenish it with such a strong and operative love towards thee, that this love may elevate it far above all mundane contemplations to thee, and maintain my soul in an uninterrupted, eager longing after thy grace. How replete with hope and consolation shall I then be in all situations of my life while I reflect on thee, O my God! how joyfully shall I submit myself to thy decrees, how mightily through my affection for thee shall I be transported beyond all assaults of the world! Hence I beseech thee with fervour and reliance, produce in me, O God, a pure heart, and grant me understanding, that I may never either be overwhelmed with the anxieties of this life, or careless in regard to the concerns of the soul, or loaded with the burden of sinful lusts. Let my soul neither through levity nor criminal ingratitude be unmindful of thee. Fit me rather to love thee with active endearment and with sacred veneration. Chain me with the gentle and indissoluble bonds of thy affection, that, so often as I prostrate myself before thy throne, I may forget all sublunary attractions, and look up to thee, thou best good, with admiration and humility.—O! that I might succeed in collecting my scattered thoughts, and converging them all to thee alone! Thou, O God, who performest all things with benevolence, and wouldst so willingly make me happy in the enjoyment of thy goodness,—thou impartest to me thy support, and exaltest my spirit above the transient

and the perishable. Whensoever I draw near to thee; teach me to pray in such a frame of mind, that I may obtain the accomplishment of my supplications; so to seek thee, that I may find thee. Teach me so to live, that I may hereafter die happily and in peace. Yes, thou wilt hearken to me; for thy mercy and thy truth are great evermore, now, and henceforth unto eternity.

JULY 30.

God's Government and Assistance always requisite to Man.

If I would this morning enter the world in reliance on my own strength, I must inevitably at the first step that I made, discover my own insufficiency, and the dominion of wickedness over my heart. Severe temptations would not be necessary to vanquish me; a trifle would be able to shake all my good purposes and undermine all my resolutions. Had I hitherto, in my contest with the world and with sin, been abandoned to my own powers, the situation of my soul would be yet far more melancholy than it really is. That I, who have been so often already subdued by small allurements, and hurried into sin, have yet till now remained ever free from more fatal aberrations and from grosser vices, whom have I to thank for this?—the force of my reason, the influence of my conscience, or the solidness of my principles and determinations? Ah! if the almighty arm of God had not held me back; had he relinquished me to the flood of destruction; had Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, not petitioned for me; what iniquity would have been too frightful for me, as soon as the Spirit of the Lord had thus forsaken me? Under what trial should I not have sunk? What seductive example would have carried me along with it? Can I, indeed, recollect without trembling, that I often lingered with pleasure on evil thoughts, and nourished impious desires? And yet now I can sincerely detest them! I can love godliness, and execute with constancy my holy designs. But if even now, while I still belong not to the number of those transgressors who drown all feelings of religion and

virtue within them, God, with his laws, his exhortations, and his threatenings, makes so weak an impression upon me; what would then become of me, if I were always to grow more accustomed to sin, more indifferent towards the Lord and towards righteousness; more insensible to my conscience, and more expert in vice? And into all these abysses of perdition I my easily fall, if thou thyself, O God, dost not preserve my heart and watch over my soul. I shudder when I think how wretched and guilty I may this day be, if thy good Spirit does not protect me from criminality and misery. How much that is terrible have I to dread in eternity, if thou rule me not with thy grace!

Lord, thou knowest me; thou knowest how small my vigour is to combat against sin. Withdraw not therefore away from me thy Spirit and thy longsuffering goodness. Warn me through my conscience of the unhappiness into which I may run headlong; arm me through thy power against all the temptations which may assail me. Merciful Saviour, who wast tempted and proved every way, I present myself before the throne of thy grace. Let me at all times with thee, and in the contemplation of thy example, find help, when help is needful for me, that I may be guarded from voluntary offences, and daily increase in sanctity

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JULY 31.

On an unprofitable Lapse of Time

NOTHING detains the rapid course of time; one year, one month, one day, flies after another, and so speedily that they are already gone while I think of their fleetness. Where are now the days of this month? They are vanished like a morning dream; and with difficulty can I recollect that it is thirty days which I have lived in this departed period. These days appear to me only as so many hours. How much did I purpose to perform during this month, which on this, its last day, remains unaccomplished! What flattering hopes did I form to myself for it, which even at this hour have not been fulfilled! Amid all the arrangements which I made,

time marched forward, and showed me the vanity of all my schemes and efforts. If I had been wise, I should, even at the beginning of the month, have anticipated its end, and conducted myself in all my affairs like a man whose time escapes out of his hands. But, alas! alas! I even strove to abridge that time which is of itself but a span long. I sought to chase away the hours, which were hurrying of their own accord, rapidly hence. I constantly consoled myself with the future, though the present is so uncertain and so transient.

And what do I now do when I stand at the close of the month? While, full of penitence, I perceive how little I have completed my duties in the elapsed space, I promise to myself, that in the days to come I shall act more commendably. But would that I might also remember how doubtful it is whether the morrow will yet be mine! Only the single immediate minute in which I live—this only is mine! What I leave undone in this minute will perhaps remain undone all my life; for the night falls suddenly, and then the work must cease. Now let this very minute be that by which I seek to profit, and which I would employ to my salvation. Let this moment bring to my memory the guilt of so many squandered minutes. Let this moment make good the sins of all my past years. But, ah! how fruitless is this wish, if thou, my Redeemer, coverest not all my offences with thy blood. Let this blood then flow for atonement and amendment upon all my past days. Let it free me from the punishment which perhaps awaits me, and let it sanctify my future life, that I may spend it, O Jesus, to thy honour and my soul's health. If I obtain this grace, the termination of the present month will be as blessed for me as I pray that the termination of my sojourn in this world may prove.

AUGUST 1.

The Invariableness of God's Goodness.

Amid the speedy and incessant flight of time, the progress of which spurns even the shortest retardment, it sweetly soothes my heart to think that thy goodness, O eternal God,

rests immoveable and fixed for ever, and that it will manifest itself to me even then, when time shall be no more. Numerous years, months, and days have fled within the period of my life; but constant and changeless has remained thy inexpressible beneficence, which, even ere I entered into the world made me the object of its propitious bounty. The further I retrace my existence, the more abundantly do I discover the proofs of my ruling providence. It shone upon me as the star of my nativity; it scattered over me the joys of infancy and youth; it displayed itself in the midst of all the dangers, infirmities, and errors to which I was exposed. Yes, the goodness of the Lord was in my childhood my nurse, in youth my guide, in my riper years my companion, and when I become grey it will still be my support.

Such great and indescribable benefits as my whole past life exhibits, justify me in hoping for the future also everything that is good from God. That providence which watched over the holy and blessed life of my Jesus will likewise magnify itself in me because I am one of his redeemed. Hence I can commence this month with a contented spirit. How many changes may the space of one-and-thirty days, which this month contains, occasion! How much during this period may I experience or endure! Since every day has its distress, how many distresses may be in store for me in a whole month! Yet, however thoughtful this consideration may render me, am I tranquillized when I reflect that God's kindness endureth eternally, and that his truth is every day renewed? I know that when this month is finished, I shall be compelled again to say, as at the close of every former one: "Never was there a day in which I received not fresh testimonies of God's benevolence."

Maintain in me, O God, this consolatory belief. Many incidents may occur to-day, or at least in the course of the present month, which may tend to shake my faith. But let nothing that shall happen to me avert my heart from thy love and affiance in thee. Implant joyful confidence and strengthening hope in my soul, that they may everywhere accompany me and hold dominion over me. Continually must I keep thee before my eyes as my lawgiver, benefactor, and rewarder. In all that I undertake be thy glorification my aim, and be the life hereafter the scope of all my endeavours. With these

sentiments I shall be enabled to comfort myself in the certainty of thy assistance, and to assure myself of thy perpetual love.

AUGUST 2.

Every Man capable of promoting Righteousness in his own Sphere, but must begin by correcting himself.

Every day places me in a new connexion with the world, and lays upon me new obligations, of which, if I would fulfil my destination, and defeat not the grand purpose of my life, I must never lose sight. I am not to be a mere spectator in the world; I ought to contribute the utmost in my power towards the diminution of evil, the promotion of virtue, and the general happiness. The house in which I dwell, the society which I frequent, the circle which is appointed to me—these constitute my world—that which belongs in particular to me, and in which I am to exercise my efforts for improvement. When all around me is abomination and desolation, here must I erect to God a sanctuary, and to innocence a refuge; since it will be demanded of me how much or how little I have effected or aided, within my peculiar sphere, the maintenance of the fear of God, or, at least, the prevention of prevailing corruption. I may be placed in a situation, and the case is daily probable, in which I shall be able to produce good, or, at least, not to obstruct it by my hinderance. I have intercourse with men; I have friends; in regard to these, I may without doubt find now and then an accidental opportunity which may create impression and amendment. Among so many useless words, a single one, spoken for warning and instruction, may be attended with immense advantage. If only God and my conscience prevail with me above everything; if only a true affection for mankind animate my bosom, it will be always possible for me to operate some good, however trivial it may seem.

Principally must I, however, occupy myself with my own reformation. My own faults are those which I must first and can most easily, correct: and if I have only first taken pains to render myself better, and to enhance the value of

my soul's salvation in my own opinion, I shall engage with zeal in the task of advancing the true happiness of my brethren. How shall I be then affected to see the vicious hastening into destruction! How readily shall I employ prayers, representations, and tears, to save their souls!

O! then let this be my endeavour on the present day, and on each which God may still permit me to behold! For he that turns a sinner from his errors, saves a soul, and will cover a multitude of sins. I will go into the world with the firm determination to live blameless and undefiled, and as a child of God amidst a perverted generation. God preserve me from the sin that I should render my fellow-creatures yet more corrupt and more flagitious through my conduct! No; I will far rather exert all my powers to increase still more widely the diffusion of righteousness and godliness. And should practical means be wanting to me, I will yet, by my supplications to the Lord and by example, become a blessing and an edification to others. Inflame me, O Jesus, with this holy ardour! Thou, illustrious Friend of man, didst labour so industriously for the felicity of the human race, thou didst always try to draw the sinner to thyself: thou lamentedst with tears the overwhelming devastation of Jerusalem. Let me herein also be like to thee, and, with as much sincerity as thou didst, sacrifice myself for the benefit of my brethren. O! what a divine joy if I can rescue but one sinner, if I can succour but one wretched brother! Let me feel this noble pleasure which even hereafter in heaven will heighten my felicity.

AUGUST 3.

The Duty of consecrating ourselves to God.

The morning of every returning day repeats to me a solemn summons to yield myself up to the Lord, the exalted friend of my soul, and the preserver of my life. How shall I live without devoting myself to him, through whom I live, move, and have my being? Is it possible that my blood should circulate without flowing for him at whose command it runs

through my veins? Is it possible that my soul should be capable of feeling its own consciousness of thinking, wishing, and loving, and yet neither think of him, nor long for him, nor love him, through whom it was created and redeemed? Can I have eyes to see, and yet not regard with reverence that God who is so visible to me in all his works? Can I have ears to hear, and listen not to that soft ravishing voice which invites me from the ways of sin to the paths of virtue? Can I possess feeling, and yet feel not that gentle irresistible force of love with which God seeks to attract me to himself? —No, Everlasting and most Holy Being, I will not act so unthankfully, so obstinately, as to withhold from thee that which thou canst by right require from me. Lo, here am I: be my soul, my body, my limbs, my health, my life, and all that thou hast given me, solemnly consecrated to thee in this morning hour. All will cease to be a happiness for me if they be not dictated to thee and to thy service. It is even my highest felicity, in like manner as it is my most bounden duty, to be thy offering and thy property.

And this I will be by performing with strictest conscientiousness what thou hast prescribed to me; by doing good with most indefatigable activity, while it is yet day with me; and by supporting, with firmness and fortitude, all that thy wisdom may decree to me. I will be so through the voluntary sacrifice of my repose and of my life itself in the accomplishment of thy statutes and of thy pleasure; and through the uninterrupted performance of the hardest duties which thou imposest on my soul. I will be so through the careful purifying of my heart from all wickedness, through the sanctification of my inclinations, and through the conquest of my passions. O! do thou look down well-pleased, my God, upon this vow of my bosom, and aid me by the force of thy Holy Spirit, that I may truly and faithfully keep it.

Thus then set thyself apart, my soul, for the Lord and for his service! Duty and gratitude exact of thee, that thou shouldst become the peculiar possession of thy God and of thy Jesus. He cries to thee: "Give me thy heart!" Beware that thou refuse not to him this offering. Give him thy heart to cleanse it, to sanctify it, and to strengthen it. Though the world on one side, and sin on the other, entreat

from thee this donation; and though thousands of thy fellow-mortals may be so foolish and so miserable as to comply with their request; O! be thou determined and resolved to say with Joshua: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." How little cause wilt thou have to regret this resolution, when thou reflectest upon its happy consequences! for goodness and mercy will follow thee here, and life and blessedness will rejoice thee hereafter.

AUGUST 4.

God's Provision for Man's Convenience and Support.

THE air which I breathe; the light by which I see; the heat that warms me; the fruits of the earth which nourish me; the water which revives me; the animals which conduce partly to my food, and partly to my assistance and convenience—all these are things which I ought to regard as great blessings which God daily bestows upon me. And though there were nothing further on the earth than merely such things as are absolutely necessary for my support, even out of these the goodness of God would be amply perceptible. But he has proceeded further in his benevolence: he has provided equally as well for my pleasures as for my necessities. I should be able to preserve my life, though I had nothing more than roots and water for my sustenance. But his goodness unlocks for me all the stores of nature, to render me satisfied and glad. He has most kindly ordained so that joy and delight stream into the soul through all the senses. Nature presents to me in summer a rapturous aspect: the earth exhibits to me, besides her verdant plants, the most beautifully variegated flowers, which not only enchant my eyes with their innumerable tints, but by their odoriferous exhalations spread around the most agreeable scents. The ear is enraptured by the song with which the birds fill the vaulted dome of the sky. All nature is employed at the order of the Creator to produce for me nourishment, refreshment, and gratification. The earth is fertile in his goodness and his gifts.

Lord, forgive me my incapacity, so anxious am I to praise thy benefits according to thy worth. But words fail me to express how gracious, how amiable, how beneficent thou art. I stand here surrounded by the wonders of thy favour. Which shall I first proclaim? Where shall I pause? Where shall my admiring amazement cease? Even the harvest-field alone is a boundless scene of thy miracles and power. The less I am able to relate them, the more carefully will I use every opportunity of reflecting upon them, and thanking thee for them. This is the way in which I may attain to the purest and noblest enjoyment of nature, and become more deserving of thy blessings and thy esteem.

Yes, almighty Benefactor, I acknowledge with grateful heart thy goodness; and may this acknowledgment influence my soul during the whole day. May it awaken me to confidence in thee. May it promote the peace of my mind, and instigate me above all things to love and to fear thee. How basely should I act were I to reward thy love with ingratitude or disrespect! How little should I deserve the continuance of thy mercy, were I not excited by it to strive after thy approbation! Let this important view be attained in me through the contemplation of thy works. Let nature open to me a school for my heart, in which I may daily learn to know more evidently thy greatness and my own insignificancy, and become more sensible, both of thy goodness and my own unworthiness. How wise, how tranquil, how happy shall I then become

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AUGUST 5.

Man a Pilgrim and Sojourner on Earth.

ABUNDANT memorials present themselves on every side to remind me, that the situation in which I am placed in this world is that of a state of pilgrimage. Whether I regard myself as a man or as a Christian, I must in either case confess that I am only a stranger and a sojourner on the earth. My body, this weak and fragile tenement, this dwelling, which even with the strongest stands but for a few years, and

which at last falls to pieces of itself, or is thrown into ruins by some external accident, forms a striking proof that my place of lasting abode is not appointed here. Even the condition of my soul is such as to bring me to the same conclusion, since the latter is ever restless and unsatisfied. All the possessions of the earth have this in common, that they are short, transitory, and fleeting. The honour of this world is uncertain and slippery. Its pleasures are not so great as the repentance that follows them. And to all this it must be added, that it costs much labour, fatigue, and uneasiness, both to obtain these worldly advantages, and even for a time to preserve them.

If this is my real situation on earth, how greatly should I act in opposition to my destiny were I to live as if this world were my fixed residence? To be convinced that this life is only a journey, and yet to toil after gratifications and amusements, yet to forget the real purpose of our travels, yet to sacrifice ourselves to the world and its allurements,—O! that would be indeed a monstrous folly. Since I know that I am but a guest and a pilgrim, I must accustom myself to a very different mode of thinking: I must possess all earthly things as if I had them not; I must use temporal goods without clinging to the lusts of the world, which are utterly incompatible with my dignity as a member of Christ's church, and with the end and destination of my spirit.

I still live to fulfil these duties:—the Lord has yet this day further prolonged my pilgrimage; and, as on the present morning, I gird myself anew for my progress, I bind myself to all the obligations which a pilgrim ought constantly to keep before his eyes. Eternal God, impress them, through thy Spirit, deeply on my heart. Amid the charms, the sensuality, and the fascinations of the world, I forget but too easily that I am on the road to heaven. Maintain this consideration in full vigilance in my soul, and let it be the directing mark of my whole conduct through this state of existence. However grievous my worldly station may appear, thou wilt not let it be void of solace to sweeten my pilgrimage. But nothing will more powerfully exhilarate me under all hardships and difficulties than the prospect of that home into which thou wilt bring me at the finish of my wanderings. O the wished-for day, when I shall quit this clay-

built hut, and be ushered into the assembly of spirits! The more I dwell on this idea, the more I feel the dignity of my nature and the exaltedness of my destiny, and the more I am thereby able to comfort myself under the sufferings of life. And while I am thus filled with the hope of immortality, I cannot pass without ardently longing after it, the short time which I have still to live.

AUGUST 6.

The Sorrows of Repentance, and their Remedy.

I KNOW thy law, thou holy and righteous God, and I know and believe that thou hast given me no commandment which does not tend to my peace. I hear daily thy parental voice in the stirrings of my conscience: I see everywhere thy judgments, when I regard the fate of those who wickedly transgress thy ordinances, and harden themselves against the exhortations and menaces of the invisible monitor within them. Frequently in my own heart do I experience thy chastising righteousness, and painfully learn that the ungodly know no peace. And yet my heart ever wavers between wisdom and folly, piety and sinfulness, virtue and vice; yet I am continually choosing that which destroys my mental repose, and renders me unworthy of thy grace. I cannot look back upon any past day, nay, not upon any elapsed moment, without accusing myself; and never yet have I lived a day on which I had not some folly to repent, some trespass to sigh over, some infidelity towards my duty and towards thee to regret. O! how anxiously does my heart wish to obtain a pure consciousness, and to be well pleasing to thee! How deeply and severely does it feel its own failings! But must I relinquish the hope of arriving at this happy tranquillity, and becoming pure in heart? Can I here never become freed from the stings of remorse, and from the torment of irresolution and inconstancy? Yes, I may rescue myself, and enjoy untroubled quiet, if I shun not the contest with my sensual appetites, if I become an observer of this heart, and if I learn to master myself and to deny myself. I may

attain to the blessed freedom of the children of God, when I have procured the strength to overcome evil with good. And this strength will not be wanting to me, if my whole soul be filled with reverence and love towards God, if God's grace be my chief desire and chief happiness, if I be always mindful of the omniscience and the justice of the Lord, and keep the conviction of my rational dignity constantly in mind; and if at the same time I hold my eyes faithfully and steadily fixed on the pattern which my Redeemer has left for me, and implicitly follow the principles and maxims of his gospel. O! how happy do I already feel in the hope that I shall succeed in reaching the great goal which Jesus has set before me, and in obtaining that unruffled calm of the soul which I have so often earnestly sought, but have never hitherto found. Be thou my support, O God, while I press forward to this goal: give power and fidelity to my weak heart, and let me in the contemplation of thee and of thy heaven find a strong incitement to the renewal of my efforts, should I ever become weary. Do thou aid me, O God, and grant me thy success.

AUGUST 7.

Motives for Contentment.

Did I possess such a happy disposition of mind, that I could declare myself contented both in good and in evil with the portion that the Almighty allots to me, and that I were sure that the bountiful and wise providence of God, even when it appeared least to do so, always consulted for my best and real advantage, how tranquilly could I behold each rising morning, how satisfied should I feel at every change of fortune, and with what composure should I await the future! But how often do unbelief and discontent at the ordinances of God arise in my soul! How often do I murmur in my heart against the Lord of my life, who leads me with such wisdom and goodness! If I carefully examine my heart, I shall find that even this morning it is not free from want of faith and discontent. I think with dissatisfac-

tion and despondency on the hardships which I have to sustain in my calling, and am grieved that I cannot obtain the success which I consider essential to my quiet.

Be composed, thou dissatisfied, cowardly heart: thou sinnest against thy Creator. God remaineth wise and supremely good, murmur as thou mayst. Perhaps thou hast some suffering to endure, and thou wouldst rise up in displeasure against it? Revert to thy past life, and mark how many benefits God has bestowed upon thee, how many afflictions he has aided thee to surmount, how many testimonies of grace far overbalancing all thy sorrows thou hast already received from him. Wherefore wilt thou not then submit with resignation to a slight inconvenience? To every station are attached its own difficulties and its peculiar uneasinesses. Deem thyself fortunate that thou art a citizen of this world, which the Almighty governs so skilfully and kindly. Thou art an instrument of his glorification; and out of every event that may occur to thee, God's majesty shines forth. Frustrate not his sacred plans through thy murmuring complaints, but honour them by a relying confidence in his providential care. Abandon thyself to his guidance with complete dependence. How would it be with thee if God would not take charge of thee? Where wouldst thou every day find peace and hope, and comfort for thy mind? How wouldst thou escape the dangers that stand ready to devour thee? Rejoice that thou hast in God a nourisher and a supporter, and that thou art an object of his gracious foresight.

Full of this joy, and full of trust, enter anew upon thy path of life. It is true thou knowest not beforehand what may this day happen to thee, and it will certainly not be free from cares and torments; but owest thou not thy best joys and thy happiest feelings to these anxieties and troubles? Does not the sun always shine more lovely after cloudy days? Dost not thou always rejoice most ardently after thou hast overcome an affliction? And thy Father knows what is most useful for thee; he tries thee not beyond thy power:—this thou mayst securely rely upon from him. Supposing that thou shalt this day have a sorrow to bear; God, who has destined to thee thy grief, must also have in store for thee its accompanying consolation. And after all, how canst

thou deserve undisturbed feiicity? This world was never formed for uninterrupted happiness; and thou art thyself too corrupted for such a state to fall to thy share. Tarry a few moments: then wilt thou be in another world, which will fulfil all thy wishes, of which so many remain here unsatisfied.

AUGUST 8.

Maxims of Wisdom.

I CANNOT begin this new day which God vouchsafes to me, either better or more prudently than by reflecting upon my destination; for when I have this before my eyes, I am preserved from many errors. By wise lessons Chiron formerly educated Achilles to be a hero. I will represent them to myself for my own instruction. Can flowers become my teachers,—why should I not accept good lessons from a man?

If God grants to thee length of days, do thou render them still longer by a good use of them, and learn to live before thou diest. Our true felicity springs, not from the extended duration of our life, but from the manner in which we employ it. Think not that an exalted station, high birth, or vast riches, can procure for thee everlasting happiness. It is badly secured when it rests on such perishable things, and not on virtue. Real happiness may be found in all ranks,—every man may be a happy man in his way; but few men seek for happiness where alone it is to be found by them; and hence the greater number see themselves bitterly deceived in their hopes. Carefully avoid the error of those who always desire too much or too little. Stretch not thy expectations too far, but at the same time never despair. Especially, however, guard thyself from indolence and negligence, and keep a strict observance over thy actions:—otherwise thy life will pass away like a dream, or, at best, in fancied pleasures. Learn in time, when and how thou must suffer; and learn already, in thy prosperous days, to be patient and contented. Thou art inclined to anger: but let not this tyrannic passion gain dominion over thee.—It causes more injury in a moment

than whole years are able to retrieve. It banishes all affection and quiet; and in no soul, except in a mild and placable spirit, can peace obtain a place. Our joys are short and interrupted. Thou in vain requirest permanent felicity. We must often be satisfied even with being not unhappy. Art thou unhappy?—seek then into the cause of thy trouble, and compare it with that of thy neighbours. Judge of thy calamity by that which another suffers. As bees suck their honey out of every flower, so do thou out of everything extract some benefit and instruction. The smallest trifles are often very useful. Learn the felicity which few understand, and yet fewer practise, the felicity of doing good. Be herein like to God, and strive to do as much service as thou canst to thy fellow-creatures. Spend not thy life in mere expectation as if it had never begun, or would never end. Hope sweetens life; but study also that thy hope may be accomplished. Time hastens away: hasten, thou, therefore, to profit by it, and to employ it wisely. Use the precious minutes which fly from thee so quickly. However short thy life may be, yet will it be gloriously completed, if thou canst say in the hour of death, "I have lived and employed every day for my soul's salvation."

AUGUS 9.

The Hope of Immortality a powerful Incitement to Piety.

I FEEL new strength for the performance of goodness, and holy zeal elevates my soul, when I think that Jesus Christ is the witness and judge of my conduct, and my faithful helper, my friend, and guide, if my heart be devoted to him, and my conduct be like his in heaven. I live under his eyes; he observes every action which I practise in faith,—yes, every impulse which I experience to glorify him. And now, likewise, as I raise my thoughts to him in devotion, he looks down upon me from his exaltation. And how happy am I if I obtain his applause! My faith may remain unknown to the world: it is to me already enough if I am known to the Lord, who sees even into that which is hidden. O! how must my heart be inflamed, when I consider that I have for

a testimony and a spectator of my worship, him who not only takes a part in every virtue which is exercised with an upright heart, but who likewise excites it in the heart itself, and grants the power which it requires! There is no description of grace to be conceived which I may not expect from the Holy Ghost, if I have only an earnest desire to become more perfect in the accomplishment of righteousness. O! what a consoling idea is it for me that I am not abandoned to my frailties, but that I receive from the Lord whom I serve vigour and support to carry his will into effect.

But the hope of a blessed immortality is that which furnishes me with the most efficacious encouragement to be faithful in my Christian vocation. Does the hope of an uncertain gain render easy to the merchant the resolution to risk a long and dangerous voyage? Does the prospect of a desired post of eminence make the ambitious man willing to submit to the most galling constraint, and deny indulgence to every inclination that may oppose his views? Does the anticipation of the pleasures which are connected with sin prompt the ungodly voluptuary to sacrifice to such gratifications his fortune, his rest, his good name, his health, and absolutely his very life?—O! how then can the exercise of my Christian duties appear too hard to me when I call to mind the recompense which is prepared for me in heaven, provided that I persevere to the end? How can I hesitate to relinquish the vain possessions of the earth, since everlasting possessions are in store for me above?

Now, therefore, will I allow myself to be deterred by no toil from fighting the good fight, striving incessantly, and remaining faithful to the claims of goodness. The hardships which may accompany my efforts shall not restrain me. Where is there a happiness to be obtained without struggle and self-denial? The more exalted the profession is to which, as a Christian, I am appointed—the greater the happiness which is granted to me through it, so much the more, likewise, is it my duty to be true and constant. Only the commencement is difficult, the progress will be lighter, and the completion full of joy. O! how shall I thus, at the close of my course, forget all my troubles, when I see before me the prize which I have laboured to win! Let me, God, I beseech thee, with this new day, advance nearer to that prize,

and not swerve from the holy hope which is laid up for me in heaven

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AUGUST 10.

Knowledge of Heaven and its Felicity.

Man, who is born and destined for heaven, must learn to know heaven and all its blessings: Man, who lives in the world, must learn to know the world and all its evils. Both acquirements are indispensably necessary to my felicity. If I do not know heaven, I shall not long after it: if I do not know the world, I shall every moment be exposed to the danger of becoming unhappy. To these two points I ought, all my life through, to direct my aim. I ought to enjoy the earth without forgetting heaven. But my very confined notions often obstruct me in this duty. I know neither heaven nor earth sufficiently. My inattention and distraction of mind are so great, that I am not ravished by the most sublime objects of heaven, nor carried away by them into vehement desire.

O! if this morning my entire soul could be moved through its first sensations of bliss! If I only placed the world, with all its known and unknown calamities, in comparison with heaven and its concealed and revealed joys! If I were only earnestly convinced that this world is nothing, and that heaven is all; then should I strive after the virtues which, in the connexion in which I stand with heaven and earth, ought to be possessed by me. How faithful should I be in the exercise of love, if the love of the righteous made perfect were always present to my contemplation! How punctual should I be in obeying the will of God, if I constantly represented to myself the blessed in heaven, who place their delight in their observance of the commandments of the Lord! How cautiously should I avoid all contention and envy, if I thought of the peace and calmness of heaven! How willingly should I undertake the conflict against the charms of the world, and every self-denial which is required in it, and everything unpleasant that belongs to this warfare, if only

that glorious reward which awaits me above were perpetually in my memory!

But let me be of good cheer: this morning will I collect all my mental faculties, and fix my heart on that happy country of which I am one day to be an inhabitant. I will accustom my heart to tear itself loose from the toils in which it is entangled. and allow myself, through the Holy Ghost, more and more to be brought into that frame of mind which will procure for me a foretaste of the felicity of heaven. I will carefully balance together heaven and the world, happiness and misery, life and death, and make my choice according to the preponderance of each.

AUGUST 11.

God's Goodness proclaimed by all the Works of Creation.

THE whole world is a theatre of God's goodness:—no creature is shut out from the enjoyment of his compassion; and of the proofs of his bounty no spot of the earth is void. I find God everywhere; in the most trackless deserts and on the smiling plains, in heaven and on earth. And of this beneficence which fills the entire universe, man possesses the most conspicuous share. When, under the impression of this idea, I turn my thoughts to nature, how great do I then appear to myself! With what feelings of gratitude and joy does my heart overflow! To what seraphic hopes is my soul exalted! Every part of the creation becomes then a means to me of the knowledge of God, and an incitement to glorify him; I live for this purpose; and for this purpose is the world replenished with such countless myriads of creatures, that I may contemplate them, and through the created learn to know and admire the Creator. I ought to acknowledge and perceive his infinite perfections, and to extend his fame. No moment of my life passes in which I might not be charmed into this happy occupation. Each respiration of my breath incites me to praise my kind Creator. My whole life is a series of blessings. Without the influence of his grace I could not

for a moment live healthful and satisfied.—Ought I not to extol such kindness!

But how little do I observe this duty! I receive the most precious gifts out of the hands of my Maker, without thinking of him. I hear all nature's hymn of celebration; I behold the ecstasy of all creatures; I see the blessings of the fields; but I do not reflect, at the same time, with emotion and gratitude on the Author of my being. O! how does the universal range of nature shame me! No single creature keeps silence; each magnifies its Creator. The heavens speak of the honour of the Lord, and the firmament proclaimeth his handy work. One day telleth it to another, and one night publisheth it to the next. How can I remain mute amid this choral thanksgiving of creation!

No; praise the Lord, O my soul: sing the praise of him who is so glorious in his works! Yea, I will exalt thee, thou King of all kings, thou Lord of all lords, and praise thy name ever and eternally. I will speak of thy noble state, and announce thy wonders; I will laud thy great goodness, and boast of thy righteousness. Thou coverest the heavens with clouds, and givest rain to the earth. Thou makest the moon to divide the year: thou makest darkness that it may be night. Lord, how great and manifold are thy works! Thou hast wisely ordered them all, and the earth is rich in thy mercies. All creatures that live come to thee, that thou mayest feed them each at its proper time. When thou bestowest upon them their nourishment, they assemble themselves together. When thou openest thy hand, they are satisfied with good. Lord, thy goodness is everlasting! Thou hast pleasure in thy productions:—I will sing to the Lord all my life long, and praise my God so long as I exist. And this day, likewise, shall employ me in the glorification of my Creator. The advancement of thy honour, O God, shall be the chief object of my life. To this aim shall all my actions, all my words conspire. And in this manner will I prepare myself for that life, the essential happiness of which consists in thy glorification.

AUGUST 12

The Christian prepared for every Vicissitude of Life.

How often already has the sorrowful mutability of terrestrial things bowed me down! how often have I learned with tears, that all earthly happiness is but vanity and vexation! From a thousand results of my experience, I am compelled to conclude that in this world no complete felicity is to be expected or desired. For how can the world render me happy, since it is nothing more than a place in which pleasure and pain continually interchange, and where I am incessantly exposed either to the accidents of misfortune, or to the wicked plots of unrighteous men? Yet, blameable as it would be, were I to become weary of my existence, and, out of despair, wish for death: equally culpable would be my conduct, if I sought for perfect prosperity in this life, and placed my heart wholly on earthly success. It would be acting most inconsiderately, to search in the world for those things which are not to be found in it. Should I on this morning, which through God's grace I live to behold, flatter myself with enjoying, during the whole day, pleasure, tranquillity, and happiness, how grievously should I deceive myself! I must with every new day hold myself prepared for new instances of the instability and vanity of all mortal things, and thus arm myself beforehand with patience and firmness against their occurrence. And if I then form the resolution to submit myself, under all circumstances, to the government of God, I shall not be so heavily depressed, or so entirely deprived of composure, when calamities happen, which disturb my quiet. Therefore will I never conceal from myself the possibility, that I may this day yet be unhappy. I am now in health, but ere the evening comes I may be lingering under deadly sickness. I have now a faithful friend, but he may lose his integrity. I now hail the rising sun with peaceful smiles of pleasure, but how soon may I perhaps shed tears! I am now living, but how shortly may my end arrive!

Thus to think is prudence; and to act according to this mode of thinking is understanding. I shall thus enjoy the gratifications of the earth without danger, and my gladness

will be the triumph of reason. The inconstancy of all things around me will render me watchful and cautious, and the world with its vanities will become a school for my heart, in which I shall learn wisdom and virtue. A clear conscience, and confidence in God will inspire me with courage, will strengthen and fortify me, and alleviate my troubles and my toils. And in this manner, even under the most afflicting events, I shall possess a sweet contentment within myself. I shall then undertake with a comforted spirit every labour and hardship imposed upon me by him from whom I have received my existence, and who has made toil the common lot of mankind. With these sentiments the burdens of life will not weigh too heavily upon my mind; and terrestrial mutability and vanity, instead of overthrowing my heart, will raise it to the blessed hope of an unperishable world, and even here bestow upon me, by anticipation, a portion of its delight.

AUGUST 13.

The Effects of secret Prayer and Devotion manifest themselves in the public Affairs of Life.

My heart urges me this morning, thou Searcher of all hearts, to make before thee a humble confession of the corruption of my soul. I feel and know, O God, and to thee also, thou discoverer of the inmost secrets of the hidden bosom, is it known, that this heart is still weak and perverse; that my understanding is governed by my passions; that I am carried away by the deceitfulness of earthly things; that I neglect the good of my soul; that I seek the vanities of temporal life with restless ardour, and in them forget the one thing needful above all, my own amendment; that, deficient in faith, and fearful, I regard the future with anxious timidity, and cast from me confidence in thee, so often as the foolish desires and expectations of my fancy remain unfulfilled. Lord, forgive me these, and, besides these, the numerous errors concealed even from myself, which I cannot confess to thee by name. But confirm also, O my God, my heart in constancy through

the operations of thy Spirit. Let me always remember, that passing feelings and impressions are not the essence of godliness; but pious sentiments which become visible in every act, and bring forth plenteous fruit. Would that I might ever continue the same that I now am; ever thus animated through intercourse with thee, ever thus finally disposed and confiding, ever thus devout and true! Are my Christian feelings awakened in this privacy? so must the very same Christian spirit become conspicuous in my public conduct. It must so regulate my words and actions, that God, angels, and men, may perceive that my piety is always uniform. My Christian profession, and my love for God, must take deep root in my soul. My love must be immoveably fixed on God. My watchfulness must increase with the temptations of this world, and my whole life must be a copy of the divine conduct of my Saviour. Then will it appear conspicuous in all my doings, how worthy of honour a Christian is. I shall in the most effectual manner promote the diffusion of Christianity, if I let my own light shine before others, and attain the consciousness of being myself a true professor of the best religion. Support me in these purposes, O Jesus, and so form me, that I may through them become ever more similar to thee, and consequently more deserving of the felicity which thou hast provided for me.

AUGUST 14.

Growth in Godliness compared with the Growth of natural Productions.

As in nature everything is perceived to be in a visible progress to maturity, so ought it to be in the moral world, and in every human heart. Men should always more and more lay aside that which is foolish, and assume a manly ripeness.

O! that I likewise might advance from a childish age towards maturity in Christian faith! I observe how nature every morning goes forward in her operations, and with the dew of each night attains to an increased growth. Have I

also with each succeeding day made a proportionate advance? Do I emulate nature in her steps? Are the subjection of my passions and the love of my enemies easier to me now than they were before? Can I now, while formerly I could only vanquish the grosser vices, subdue likewise the subtle and more hidden failings of my heart? Grant me, O God, enlargement in thy grace! And if I see many days pass away without fruit, so let them also pass away without any obstinate transgression of thy law.—How refreshing is the rain when all nature languishes! O! that I might so experience the efficacy of the divine grace in my heart, and feel the sweet revivings of the Holy Spirit!—that I might likewise be as beneficent to all my brethren, and to all the wretched by whom I am surrounded, and thus raise their drooping spirits through comfort and charity. These are the sentiments of a Christian: he will not be fortunate and happy merely for himself; he divides his joys with others, and is glad only when he participates in the fate of his fellow-creatures.

But am I not discontented even in the midst of the beauties which nature displays to me, and in the lap of abundance? Do I not murmur, that the summer and its gratifications speedily disappear, and that yet a few months longer and no vestige of it will remain? How foolish and how culpable is such dissatisfaction. And yet in the midst of this short fleeting season, tedium torments me, and dissipations and distractions rob me of the enjoyment of its best hours. No, my soul, make a more pleasing use of these lengthened days, and prepare thyself for winter, through the pious contemplation of nature. Be only assured, that in the circle of mutability, in which thou and all creatures must continually whirl round, a perpetual summer would become to thee at last so customary and so burdensome, that thou wouldst be no longer able to feel its charms. Ponder therefore on this truth, that man and the seasons too bloom like a flower in the field; when the wind has passed over it, lo! it is no longer to be found. But the grace of the Lord endures from eternity to eternity with such as fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children.

This grace, then, must be my consolation and delight, amid the transitoriness of the pleasures of summer. And since my life is equally transient, I will devote it to God, in order that,

exalted above all the vicissitudes of fortune, I may find that true felicity which is founded, O Lord, on a reconciliation with thee. Only from this source can I expect permanent and satisfying joys. All else vanishes as the vision of a morning slumber, and leaves care, sorrow, and disappointment behind.

AUGUST 15

Happiness the universal Wish, and God's Aid implored for its Attainment.

THE common wish of all rational creatures at the commencement of this day has for its object happiness. However opposite the inclinations of men are usually wont to be, they all agree in this, that each earnestly desires that misfortune may keep far from him. And if I examine all the various wishes which have arisen in my soul at the break of the present morning, I find that well-being and felicity are the amount of the favours which I petition from God. But do I choose the means which may be subservient to the accomplishment of my desire? I am, it is true, not inactive to forward my success and my prosperity. I work indefatigably; I strive to procure friends for myself; I toil for wealth; I take care of my health and repose; I labour hard to increase in knowledge. Yet with all my exertions, I have not been able to obtain that felicity for which my heart so ardently longs; nor have I yet found that tranquillity of soul, without which there is no real happiness on earth. I still wish every day for a more permanent state of fortune, more steadfast joys, and more complete ease, than my friends, my possessions, my health, and my understanding have hitherto sufficed to produce for me. So well do I perceive that these things, notwithstanding that they are most eagerly coveted by the whole world, are yet far from consummating that felicity which is adapted to satisfy the cravings of my immortal spirit.

O God, thou fountain of happiness, thus long have I already wandered to and fro and sought felicity, and yet I

find it not! Show me then in thy mercy the way that leads to it, and lend me strength to walk in the same. Convince me, through thy Spirit, that I only then prosper when I listen to thee, when for thy sake I avoid evil, and place my highest joy in adherence to thee. Teach me every day more clearly to see, that in those paths which I have hitherto pursued, there is no happiness, no pleasure, no rest to be found. Every day do I experience that all things in the world are vain and wretched; and yet I allow myself to be perpetually dazzled by their glare, and seduced by their allurements. O Lord, let thy voice yet prevail in my soul, and the felicity of godliness exercise an irresistible dominion over my heart. Even this day the enticements which the wicked throw out to beguile me into their destructive company, will be numerous around me. Do thou strengthen my belief and my fidelity, that I may not follow them, but choose the society and the narrow right-hand road of the pious, which, though at first disagreeable and fatiguing, is in its progress and termination beautiful and delightful. Here I shall find everything that my real happiness requires. And then should the wealth and the idle joys of life be sparingly apportioned to me, I shall obtain other advantages, which will richly indemnify me for the want of these. Now I commence this day in the firm resolution to proceed only in thy ways, O God. Withdraw not from me thy support, without which I shall every moment be exposed to the danger of falling or of backsliding. Under thy gracious guidance let me prosecute my journey unobstructed, and arrive at length at the goal of all my wishes and efforts—namely, the salvation of my soul.

AUGUST 16.

Man, unable to glorify God worthily by his Lips, must be the more zealous to do so by his Actions.

Lord, thou Governor of the whole world, how glorious hast thou made thy name on the earth! How great and inexpressible are the wonders of thy love, of which with all my meanness and unworthiness I am even now a witness! Jehovah,

great things hast thou executed in me! I cast myself down in the dust before thee, and humbly venerate thy infinite affection: I praise thy compassion every morning, though it is not to be uttered. No, I cannot describe it: and even had I all the eloquence of angels and of men, I could not worthily celebrate it. But thou desirest not the reverence of the lips; in spirit and in truth must thy children worship thee. Ah! I must take shame to myself, when I consider my own coldness, my own want of feeling, my own ungratefulness. Thy goodness is incomprehensible:—but have I hitherto employed all the energies of my soul to contemplate it, and have I occupied myself assiduously in meditating upon it? Thy love is inexpressible:—but have I more glorified it through my actions? Has my conduct tended to thy honour? Have I directed the talents, the blessings, the time, which thou vouchsafest to me, to thy exaltation? Ah! God, how many days have I spent in which I scarcely thought of thee! How many in which I never praised thee! Yet numberless allurements presented themselves to me which exhorted me to laud thy name. How great is the work of thy hands in all places! When I regard myself and my own existence, the earth which I inhabit, and the heavens which encompass me, how pressing is the invitation which is made to me to extol thy goodness and thy might! And what shall I say of that wonder which surpasses all wonders, that for my salvation thou hast given to me thy only-begotten Son? Were I still to remain insensible and ungrateful, the heavens would be struck with consternation at me, and the earth would rise up in vengeance against me.

May my heart ever be as full of the glory of God, as my lips now overflow in strains of thanksgiving to his name! Grant, O God, that during my whole life, a cordial feeling of thy boundless love may fill my entire soul, and equally as at present stimulate my breast. But it must also be evident both in my words and my deeds: or how ashamed should I be to praise thy goodness in my devotions, and in my hymns to thank thee. I should be ashamed to acknowledge that in me thy mercies have been exceedingly great. No day must elapse in which I do not think of God, in which I do not admire his love in profound reverence, and rejoice in his grace. Especially must that immutable memorial of his un-

speakable love, which the Lord hath given in the redemption of Jesus, prompt me to faith, confidence, and adoration.

My Lord, my everlasting Benefactor, do thou thyself render my heart inclined and fitted to love thee. Heaven and earth are heralds of thy fame; make me then, even me, likewise, thy rational, redeemed creature, a true worshipper and adorer of thy glory.

And if I, according to the ability which thou to that purpose bestowest upon me, pay to thee sincere homage, then let my thanks be pleasing to thee; and render me even more perfect in them till the time of the future life, when united to the assembly of thy elect I shall better conceive and more worthily exalt thy infinite Majesty, O God, without end.

AUGUST 17.

Duty of Watchfulness.

EVERY new awakening from sleep is a new excitement and remembrance to me to be watchful in spirit; every new day a new obligation to employ my time with wisdom. I will be mindful of this invitation to gratitude; I will watch over myself, that sin may not intrude with frightful violence into my mind, and that my time may not pass away without profit. It is a most dangerous state for a man, when he goes forward like a dreamer, though he is in constant risk of being overtaken by the most frightful misery. Must I not at every instant be in expectation of the coming of Jesus? No hour places me in security from the approach of death; no station, though it may be the most happy that the world admits, can free me from the consequences that may follow this inevitable change. How necessary it is therefore always to watch: always to be ready for my last day, always to be prepared to exchange earth for heaven! And how much toil, how much care, how much attention are demanded, if I would attain to this frame of mind.

Reflect upon this, my soul! Resolve on the morning of the present day to pass it in redoubled watchfulness and solicitude. But consider well, likewise, how great is the extent

of the duties which thou must exercise in this endeavour. Thou must worship God, thy Father, and serve him only. Him thou must love above all things; and him as the constant witness of thy actions, and as the most high Judge, thou must have incessantly before thy eyes. Therefore be cautious in thy words, pure in thy thoughts, and in all thy doings temperate and considerate. Therefore flee all unlawful gratifications, and keep a check upon thy desires. Thy heart must never allow itself to be fascinated with the enjoyments of this life, that thou shouldst sacrifice to them alone thy time, thy faculties, thy love. It must rather be thy disposition to yield up all things back that thou possessest to the Lord, who gave them to thee; and never to rise against him with murmurings, when it pleases him to take them from thee. In short, thou must so live that thou mayst expect a happy death, and be able to look forward to the appearance of thy Judge with cheerfulness. And in this endeavour thou must never be indolent nor dilatory. For as the period of death is so uncertain, thou subjectest thyself otherwise to the peril of being snatched off in the midst of thy carelessness. Watchfulness must, as well as patience, be a perfect work, and endure till the close of existence. Those only will be crowned, who preserve a good conscience and faith unto the end.

O Lord, thou who hast awakened me out of the sleep of the body, through the resuscitating beams of thy glorious sun, help me by the light of thy word, that I may also awake from the slumber of my soul. As vigilant as my body is now, for the concerns of this life, so let my soul likewise be roused for the business that appertains to the life hereafter. Thou wilt come, and exact from me an account. Let me by this thought be savingly alarmed, and impelled to delay nothing that may be connected with my duty. Who knows, whether I must not this day render up my account? Should I be placed as a sleeper and a dreamer before the tribunal of Jesus, alas! O God, how melancholy would my fate be!

AUGUST 18.

Dangers of Life.

As a man who entrusts himself in a fragile bark to the stormy seas, so is he who enters into the world: on all sides dangers encompass him and menace his quiet, his happiness, and his life; on all sides allurements to sin flow like a torrent into his soul. Woe unto him who rushes unprotected into. so perilous a world, and who without foresight, without courage, without preparation, exposes himself to its fury. The world is a place wherein collect together bad examples and corrupted habits. The firmest virtue may, through intercourse with it, be shaken, and the most steadfast brought to the ground. And how much have I in particular to dread, I, who am so weak in goodness, and such a tyro in Christian practice! How soon will the impulse of devotion which I now feel in this solitary hour of rising day be chased from my bosom, if I rashly associate myself with the company of the mockers! How easily will all love for God vanish from my soul, if I abandon myself to the voluptuous slavery of sensuality! How quickly may the emotions of pity and fraternal affection be stifled in my heart, if I listen to the discourse of the uncharitable, and observe the conduct of inhuman men. At present I still feel an inclination for righteousness, and a hatred for evil; but how soon may my innocence be lost, if I am relinquished to the influence of the wicked, and to the pliableness of my own temper! Everywhere I encounter the enchantments of sin, and the worshippers of the world: virtue alone is almost entirely forsaken, and has few votaries.

I cannot, therefore, sufficiently watch over myself, in order that flagitious example may not carry me away likewise. How necessary is it that I should shun the conversation of the vicious world, or at least never enter into it with any other view than to correct it through my edifying behaviour, and through wholesome exhortation! I ought to be ashamed to speak the language of pride and presumption, when I should only utter expressions of humility. I ought to be ashamed to resemble the devil in my actions, when I bear

about with me an angel's image. I ought to be ashamed to haunt the courts of the impious, when the celestial spirits strive for my friendship. I ought to be ashamed of the applause of the earth, when the approbation of heaven should be the object of my wishes, and my efforts.

Exert thyself, my soul, for this applause, for this honour, for those examples, which heaven exhibits. Strengthen thyself in thy doings, through the pattern of the blessed spirits, who after having, under all temptations, clung fast to rectitude, now and evermore enjoy the reward of their constancy and fortitude. But especially let the earthly demeanour of thy Jesus fortify and confirm thee. How spotless did he continue amid all trials and enticements! so little did he permit himself to be borne down by the impetuous corruption of the times, that he even gained, through his holy tenor of life, new converts to virtue and piety, and made the might of iniquity totter. Be of one mind with Jesus:—flee the world, and keep thy conscience untainted. Preserve constantly before thy eyes, at the view of every carnal seduction, that heaven towards which thou shouldst hasten, according to which thou oughtest to form thyself, and to which thou shalt attain through changeless love and fidelity.

AUGUST 19.

The Promises of God stable and sure.

My destiny rests in the best and most faithful hands, since I have resigned it to the Lord, who has the destinies as well as the hearts of all men in his power, and directs them according to his wise counsel. He knows and sees all my necessities, and knows besides the means through which they may be relieved. To him nothing is unknown that can tend either to the preservation or to the destruction of my life. And in both cases he possesses complete sway either to ward off the latter or to grant the former. Nothing can limit his dominion:—he speaks, and it is done; he commands, and his decree stands immovable; he changes times and hours; raises up kings, and throws them down again from their seat

of empire. In confidence in this omnipotence and in this wisdom I may, under all circumstances, expect the best possible issue, and shall be able to surmount all trials:—for the Lord, in whom I trust, is infinitely good. He loves me far more tenderly than a father can love his favourite child. And though he has not the slightest advantage from my happiness, he has yet an infinite desire to render me happy. This conviction is already quite sufficient to strengthen me in the hope that God will not forsake me; but when I think, at the same time, that he has given me the most precious promises that his goodness shall be experienced by those who turn to him with affiance; then do I fully perceive that every doubt as to the compassion and fatherly love of the Deity is a most heinous sin. The instances of so many holy men who have been consoled in their sorrows, and rescued out of their need and their perils, satisfy me that God's assertions stand firmer than heaven and earth. Inestimable comfort lies, moreover, in the assurance that the love and the faithfulness of God is liable to no alteration; that God has not only the ability but also the will to accomplish what he has declared. He remains always inclined to do me good when I do not myself erect obstacles to his beneficence. All things conspire to convince me that God is my aid, and that I dare, with full comfort, to put my hope in the Lord who has made heaven and earth.

I lift up to thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, this morning, my hands and my heart. From thee I to-day expect, with the artless reliance of a child, help and support. As I am ignorant what fate thou hast this day decreed to me, I can do nothing more soothing to my mind than to abandon to thee my entire doom, in joyful anticipation of thy benignant care. I cannot become unhappy if thou hast pity upon me; and thou wilt have pity upon me if I follow thy way and devote myself to thee with a confiding spirit. I will do both with sincerity, and retain thee continually in my view. Fulfil then in me thy promises, and let me find the assistance which I hope for and require. How does the belief, which I owe to my Saviour, cheer my soul:—the belief that thou hearest when the wretched sigh and implore thy rescue, that even through afflictions thou blessest thy children and leadest them through the roughest paths to heaven, and that

thou wilt in thy own good time make to shine forth in brightness the night of our earthly destinies

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AUGUST 20.

Proofs of God's Goodness to ourselves.

How elevated, how comforted do I feel myself when I look back upon the vicissitudes of my life, upon the paths in which the Lord hath guided me, upon the dangers out of which his omnipotence hath rescued me, and upon the joys which his goodness hath imparted to me! Every moment of my existence deserves its own peculiar song of praise! Yet why speak I of life?—The step out of my original nothing into being deserves eternal exaltation. For who could have obliged God to draw me forth out of my nonentity? It is all pure benevolence. Do I carry my researches back into my childhood? how numberless are the marks of the Divine goodness which there meet my eyes!

With a body of the weakest texture, and amid a thousand risks and perils, which the fondest vigilance could not have arrested or averted, I happily vanquished all the evils which assailed the spark of lately-gifted animation, and grew up as doth a flourishing plant. And when, afterwards, the levity and the folly of youth exposed me to so many dangers, still did the almighty power of God protect me, still did his parental attachment preserve me, still did his providence watch over my existence. But yet far greater than the benefits enjoyed by my corporeal part are the graces which he allows my soul to experience! How many cares does he take away from my heart! How much bitterness is sweetened through his comfort! How many tears are wiped from my cheeks! And, what is yet infinitely more essential, how many sins are daily forgiven to me! How shall I recompense the Lord for the many benefits which he bestows upon me?

My entire inability, both in soul and body, tells me that it is impossible to remunerate the blessings of God. But so much the more is it my duty, O Lord, incessantly to praise thee for thy bounty, to place my whole trust in thee, and to

dedicate to thee both my body and my soul. As often, therefore, as I call to mind thy blessings, let me also remember my own obligations. I ought continually to glorify thee, my Benefactor, through my life. I ought so to live as the infinite value of thy evidences of grace deserves, in unalterable love to thee, and in firm reliance on thy goodness. To this sacred conduct let even this morning on which thou permittest me again to wake to life incite me; and let every favour which thou shalt this day vouchsafe to me, prove a new exhortation to me to serve thee, and to fear thee, and to trust in thy goodness. Thus shall I receive fresh proofs of thy munificent love, and be able for ever to comfort myself with thy grace.

AUGUST 21.

The Christian at the Feet of his Redeemer.

REDEEMER! I come to thee: I sit down at thy feet to be instructed and quickened by thee. Thou attractest me to thee by thy grace: I will listen to none but thee; I will believe in none but thee; for thy word is the word of my GOD; thy doctrine is not thy own, but the doctrine of him that sent thee. Only speak, therefore; for thy servant heareth thee. Thou art he, O Lord, whom I worship: my heart loves thee alone; only after thee does it long; only after thee does it wish to be able to fashion itself. Exalted Teacher, thou vouchsafest to me the high happiness of being strengthened and encouraged through thy example, comforted through thy promises, redeemed through thy love. I am forced to adore in silence, and to regard thy example with deepest admiration.

Thou art of a gentle mind:—O! how necessary is this virtue to me. How soon are my passions in disorder! My vindictive, implacable heart evinces on every occasion its unamiable feelings; the smallest trifle can inflame me, the slightest injury can ruffle my composure. Teach me, mild, divine Philanthropist, thy courteous humanity, of which on earth thou gavest so many proofs. Take my revengeful heart from me, and grant me a soft conciliatory spirit, that willingly

forgives and blesses its enemy. Thou art humble—I am devoted to pride: do thou, therefore, O unassuming Jesus, conquer my self-love. Discover to me my guilt, my misery, my abjectness, and the sinful condition of my heart, which renders me an abomination to God.

Thou promisest to me, adorable Redeemer, that with such sentiments I shall find peace for my soul. I, wretch that I am, have hitherto sought it in the gratification of my criminal desires, and in the insane fancies of my haughty imagination. But instead of the peace which I sought, I found always new causes for sorrow, for disquiet, and for discontentment; I now perceive my folly, and lend an ear to the voice that invites me to repose. O! how ineffable is the grace which thou deignest to show me! Lord, I throw myself into the arms of thy compassion, and resign myself now and for ever to thy boundless mercy. I should deserve to be made an offering to thy avenging righteousness. But spare me, O! compassionate Jesus; and withdraw not from me, in these circumstances, thy favour. I am prepared for all. To thee will I henceforward live, to thee will I die. Jesus, thou art my love and my life.

Happy day which awakens me to such sentiments! Amid the sweetest sensations of tranquillity, of peace, and of joy, will this day flow along, if I spend my life, formed through thy doctrine, and quickened through thy hope. And as on this my whole felicity depends, O! vouchsafe to me this grace, which must both in life and in death be my consolation. Grant me a submissive soul, resigned wholly to thy will, and a charitable heart, exercising kindness both to friends and foes. Thus shall I pass my days in mental ease, and at length attain to that realm of gentleness and love, to which, through thy redemption, thou hast destined me.

AUGUST 22.

Submission to the Will of God.

If the choice were left free to me this morning to obtain by my entreaties whatever my heart may desire, this would be the

chief tenor of my prayer: "O my Father, thou hast permitted me to behold again another morning, let it not be, I implore thee, the last of my life. Spare me those bitter separations which tear me from all that I hold dearest in the world. Spare me the grief of being poor and needy; and place me not under the sad necessity of begging my bread, or taking refuge in the aid of public charity. Spare me those agonies under which many thousands wish for the release of death; and the mutilation of my body, which would rob me of my strength and happiness." These petitions, regarded in themselves, contain nothing culpable; but they would become culpable, if I should seek to extort, as it were, a compliance with them from God, or should manifest impatience if it did not please him to fulfil them. Far be it from me therefore to murmur and to resist, when the Almighty deems it good to recall me from the world, to snatch away from me my friends, or to place me in needy and lamentable circumstances: even then will I obey, even then submit myself to his decrees, and say with Jesus: "Shall I not drink the cup which my Father has given to me?"

Truly this is a hard trial for so weak a being as I am; but I am nevertheless bound, as a subject of the world's great Ruler, to do his pleasure. His is the dominion, his is the power over all that there is on earth: and if I reflect that this dominion is a gentle dominion, and this power a power blended with the tenderest affection, I shall not feel cause to repent my resignation to God's will. Everything is good which my wise and good God decrees to me. If he does not always give me that which is agreeable to me, he gives me, however, that which is salutary:—how can I therefore do otherwise than honour his ordinances? Should it not please him to let me become aged and gray-headed in this world; he will at least in my short lifetime grant me sufficient proofs of his love to render my departure easy. Should it please him to deprive me of that which I consider the felicity of my life; he will then vouchsafe to me other blessings well worthy of my love and my joy. Should it please him to reduce me to poverty; who knows what advantageous views he hence purposes to further in my behalf? Should it please him to deprive me of my bodily health; if he only preserves the health of my soul, and refuse me not his aid in my infir-

mities, then will I joyfully yield to his dispensation; for to me, a short-sighted mortal, it is not conceded to fathom the counsels of God. Though I may not therefore see how his governance can conduce to my peace in particular instances, I will not the less believe that it does so; for happy are they who see not and yet believe.

Bring me, O God, through thy Spirit to this blessed frame of mind. Grant me thy Spirit, when obedience, silence, and patience are requisite. Let me give to others an example of composure, and evince through my whole conduct how satisfied, how tranquil, how invincible a Christian is who submits himself to thy will.

AUGUST 23.

The most secret Whispers of Prayer reach God, to whom our Frame of Mind is accurately known.

Lord, thou sittest on the throne of thy glory, and reignest to eternity. How many prayers and supplications have ascended to thee, since the world first stood, without the least sigh being ever forgotten by thee! How numerous are the petitions which this morning are sent up to thee, without even a single thought escaping thy observation! O! how am I pleased and cheered by this idea! I dare also hope that my matinal devotion will be heard by thee; that at thy right hand sitteth my exalted Redeemer, who is always mindful of me, and intercedes with thee for me, when I entreat thy blessing and thy grace. But yet a certain sorrowfulness seizes my soul even under this conviction. Consolatory as is the thought that thou, O Lord, lookest down upon me, and givest heed to my desires, I am nevertheless troubled when I recollect that thou markest also the disposition of mind in which I address thee, my want of reverence and ardour, the impurity of my heart, and the foolish wishes which fill and influence this heart. Therefore I do humble myself before thee, and confess to thee with deep abashment that my soul is not yet cleansed from sinful inclinations and sensual lust.

In the conscious feeling of my imperfection I thank thee, with strong emotion, that thou yet grantest to me time to effect my amendment, and to become worthy of thy grace, that with every new day of my life thou strengthenest, through new proofs of thy goodness, my heart, in its love towards thee, and animatest my zeal for the performance of Christian duties; that through the gospel of thy Son thou enlightenest my Spirit, and suppliest my mind with force to subdue evil by the weapons of grace. O! how can I yet longer be thy ungrateful child,—yet longer continue wilfully undeserving of such mercies! Or how can I tranquillize myself with the thought that I have still accomplished some of thy commandments, that I am not so light-minded, so unconscientious, and so fickle as many of my brethren?—Not that I have already laid hold of it, or am already perfect; but I yet strain after that great prize of perfection, can I by any means obtain it.

If I am only in favour with thee, if I only rescue my soul, if I only arrive through thy mercy to the possession of eternal life, then can I endure all that is painful in this world, and consider all my other wishes fulfilled. My determination is unchangeable: I will adhere to thee, O God, so long as I live. As well in the days of prosperity as in those of anguish shalt thou be my confidence. Forsake me not, O God of my salvation. Hearken to this prayer; hearken to the sighs of all thy children. So many of the destitute, so many of the poor and the miserable, so many of the sick and dying—will this morning cry to thee:—let no sigh remain unheard: have compassion upon all men!—In thee I hope, in thee do I put my trust.

AUGUST 24.

The different Ages of Man.

Melancholy indeed is the picture which my own experience presents to me of human life. If I proceed from the first years of my existence to the furthest stretch of vital duration, how many traces of vanity and of misery shall I

everywhere encounter! What is man, when he enters into the light of the world? A pitiable worm, that is not even aware of its own state. His first appearance on this scene of trial is encompassed with dangers; and if he even issues happily from the womb of his mother, he yet immediately proclaims by his wailings that he is born to suffering and pain; and in this is he, as it were, a prophet of all the vexatious events which shall accompany him through the whole series of his fleeting years. He has not the slightest power to assist himself; but must be carried, fed, and preserved by others. To how many perils is he exposed before he can regulate either his body or his soul! and when this comes within his ability, then does he instantly begin to transgress. The corruption of his heart becomes but too visible, and displays itself in a thousand follies and foibles. So grows up man amidst afflictions and sorrows, and then, amid numberless cares and troubles, reaches the highest summit of age, while, by his perversity and shortness of sight, he constantly labours to render the burdens of life still more galling. To how many futile idols does he sacrifice himself, and how little is he anxious to consecrate the bloom of his years to his Creator. His passions and sinful appetites wax daily stronger: he is the slave of inclinations which he cannot oppose, and which always remove him to a greater distance from God. At one time anger infuriates him; at another illicit passion seduces him; now indolence enervates, now voluptuousness degrades him; then, again, all combining together, they overwhelm him, distract his agonized conscience, render this world a hell, and his Creator his enemy. His years increase apace, but not so his wisdom; and in his carelessness he reflects not that each hour brings him nearer to his end. He reaches his manhood. But this change also is accompanied with many a woe, many a solicitude, many a torment. Now fear and hope assail him; now strife and discord; now poverty and want; now sickness and pain. Finally, man climbs to the last pinnacle of his years. But this station is nearly the most wretched and the most tortured of all; the eye is dark, the ear deaf, the taste dull, the hand tremulous, and the whole frame powerless. Sleepless nights, anxiety for the support of his frail body, melancholy thoughts, and corporeal pain, accompany man to the grave, and by this he is

at last swallowed up:—this is the last scene of his earthly existence.

A great part of this misery I have already experienced. And how much still awaits me? Perhaps the present day will again afford me sad proofs of the grievousness of existence. But let me meet them with courage and confidence, and employ them to the salvation of my soul. I shall prosperously surmount all this day's sufferings, and those of all future ones, if I keep God before my eyes and in my heart, and do not augment my calamities by my sins. O God, I recommend myself, for this day and for my whole life to come, to thy guidance, sanctification, and longsuffering goodness. Without thee I cannot be happy; I can, as a sinner, have no hope of immortality. Have compassion upon me. I am even as a man deserving of thy pity, but yet more so as a sinner. What should I be without thee and thy compassion?

AUGUST 25.

Desire to become worthy of God's Love and Mercy.

All-adorable Being! Thou art the most tender and most beneficent, the truest and wisest friend that I have in the world. Thou hast displayed to me infinitely more love than I could have shown to myself; more love than I can expect from the world; more love than, considering the sinfulness of my heart and my own unworthiness, I dare either anticipate or pray for. How highly hast thou loved me, how rich hast thou made me through thy affection! O! that I might be more worthy of this infinite love than, according to the testimony of my own conscience, I really am. Well do I feel and know in this devotional hour what I owe to thee and to thy parent tenderness; but the baubles of this earthly life weaken my spiritual emotions and mislead me into unthankfulness; for how often does my dissatisfied soul forget how much good thou hast done to it; how often does it murmur, when it ought to praise thee and publish thy goodness! O God, how deeply, how deeply does a heart so void of love

debase me! And how incapable am I, through my own power, of exalting myself to more becoming sentiments! I wish, indeed, and strive to render my heart better, and to increase my little claim to thy esteem; but I still for ever feel the burden of my sins under which my affections, when they would soar to thee, sink to the earth. Therefore be thou gracious to me, O my God, and release me from perdition through the workings of thy Spirit. Inflame my cold heart, that it may be penetrated by the fire of thy love, and make thee the object of its wishes, its adoration, and its efforts. Impress profoundly on my mind the remembrance of that love which Christ has evinced towards me, in redeeming me by his blood. And when my love would cool, O! then let it be again warmed by the spectacle of the suffering and dying Jesus, and by the prospect of that heavenly kingdom, in which thou wilt reward eternally thy faithful worshippers.

This day must become that happy epoch of my life, at which I begin to love thee with ardour and zeal, and to be devoted to thee with redoubled fidelity! Amid what sweet sensations will my days then glide along their course! How light through this love will all things prove to me, which I may still have here to suffer! How little trouble will it then cost me to renounce every other allurement for this love, to eschew sin, to reject the vanities of this world, and to make election of heaven, that boundless theatre of felicity and love.

AUGUST 26.

Morning Meditations for the Soul.

THIS new day of life is an incitement and obligation to thee, my soul, maturely and conscientiously to reflect in silent solitude upon thy great destination, and the purpose of thy existence here. Go not again unprepared, nor with rash and careless boldness into the world; but ponder well how dangerous the world's allurements may yet be to thy heart, if thou shouldst heedlessly abandon thyself to them. If the fear of God bear thee not company, if the recollection of his omnipresence be not always near thee, then art thou lost.

This is the best time to think of the duties which thou must retain in view amid the distractions of this life.

Let thy thoughts be occupied with the greatest changes which nature and God's government produce, but especially with the perfections of thy Maker. Think of the infinite compass of the divine intelligence, which knows each creature, and understands its inmost wish. This will awaken within thee a holy dread of God's high majesty, and make thee tremble at the name of sin. Remember his universal presence; for this may soothe and comfort thee, since it offers God to thy notice as thy friend and thy protector. Regard his endless goodness:—our God is love; and all nature is filled with the gifts of his bountiful beneficence. Call to mind the particular instances of his rescue and defence, with which thy life so plenteously teems. Darest thou pretend to assert that thou hast deserved them? Recollect how often God has loaded thee with benefits, which thy soul conceived not, which thy heart had never ventured to expect. Compute the follies and the sins both of thyself and of mankind in general, and wonder at the Almighty's patience and indulgence. Recount thy own transgressions, and with sincerity repent them.—And next let the contemplation of the love of Jesus completely occupy thy heart. Admire the extraordinary humiliation through which he became man, and resolved to suffer and endure the death of the agonizing cross. How wondrous, how divine, how far above all language is this love! Follow him from the cross down to the grave: follow him through the realms of the dead: gaze upon him in the glory of his resurrection: regard him in the brightness of his exaltation, and in the boundless power of his dominion. Look, lastly, into thy own self, and see how corrupted, how unholy thou art, and thence learn to know the value of the divine grace.

Yes, I am determined: with these thoughts will I quit my privacy, and reunite myself to the world in that social relation to which God, in his wise providence, has ordained me. These thoughts shall remain present with me during the entire day; and I will exert my utmost care that they may, by no digressions of business or of pleasure, be either suppressed or enfeebled. I will therefore lose sight of none of the duties which my earthly profession demands from me. Thus shall

I be able to promise to myself the blessing of God, and thus can I hope in all circumstances to live tranquilly and contentedly.

AUGUST 27.

God All in All.

This day do I elevate my heart to thee, O God, my soul's comfort, and my portion in eternity! To be united and reconciled with thee, produces real happiness and pure joy: for with thee is life: thou art alone the true light. He that strays from thee, hastens to destruction; he that abandons thee is lost; he that loves thee not, loves death. Blessed is the Christian, who lives always under thy charge, in thy grace, and in amity with thee! Thou art the best teacher, the surest guide, the most faithful protector, and the wisest counsellor. Men with their wisdom and strength, the earth with its wealth and power, the world with its joys, heaven with its bliss, what are they without thee, what are they for him who possesses thee, and in thee everything? Riches, pleasure, honour, what are ye?—sources of momentary gratification, but also of long-continued misery. Your service is slavery, your enticements are destruction, and your recompense is damnation. It is true, that to pay you tribute is called wisdom by the world; to be favoured by you is esteemed happiness. Your laws prevail on the earth, and everything is in vassalage to your charms; and I should be so too, if through thy revelation, and through thy Son. O my heavenly Father, I knew not better treasures! I also should serve sensuality like a bondsman, if I were not assured that such delights are laid up for me in eternity as far exceed all that the earth can boast of.

Death, judgment, eternity; these are the frightful but exalting—the terrible but salutary objects on which I cannot reflect too much. Here it will render me wise and hereafter happy, if I preserve them continually in my recollection. Eternally be thou praised by me, merciful Jesus, through whom these contemplations have been stripped of the dreadfulness which my sinful condition discovered to me in them.

Praised be thou that I am not doomed to live or die in uncertainty; I know the destination of my life and the purpose of my death; but would that I might always act in conformity to this knowledge! Lord of my life, teach me yet, mindful of my immortality, the wisdom to aspire to that which is on high; that I may be to-day as industrious for heaven as I shall perhaps be for the concerns of this world; and that my future happiness in eternity may be as close to my heart as my temporal prosperity. Grant me the grace to dwell in the midst of the world unspotted, and in the midst of worldly-living men to remain heavenly-minded. Only do thou always vouchsafe to me, benignant Father, thy superintendence and the government of thy Spirit, that I may not decline from thee, nor lose sight of my duties.

In this manner I may enter upon this day without disquiet. If I have but thee for my friend, what have I to apprehend! If thou shelterest me, what can harm me? If thou guidest me, how can I err from my way? My life, my soul, my happiness, are in thy hands; appoint to me what pleaseth thee. In this or in the other world, in good fortune or in bad, in life or in death, I am thine; and thou, my God, art mine

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AUGUST 28.

Memorials of Decay and Death.

In how lively a manner does everything that surrounds me remind me of the common lot of mankind—mortality! Though I should rejoice in the possession of the firmest health; though I should feel undiminished vigour of body; though I knew not either pain or sickness; yet could I not flee from the thought of death:—for every hoary elder leaning on his staff; every look which I cast on the graves of them that are fallen asleep; each diseased wretch whose sighs I hear; every pallid visage, the result of blanching sickness; yea, even every withered flower, proclaim to me the perishable condition of our terrestrial nature. Therefore will I not live carelessly. I am not indeed one of those unfortunate

beings who behold the present morning on the bed of agony, with tears and groans. I can welcome its approach with cheerfulness, and raise my countenance smiling to heaven. O! what a favour is this which I receive from thee, my Father! How can I be sufficiently thankful to thee for such a peculiar instance of thy goodness? But am I, on this account, secure from death?—No; even when I feel myself full of life and sound in constitution, even then I am hastening forward, without respite, to my dissolution; for how unsteady is my health, how delusive my hilarity, and how swift in decay are the blossom and beauty of my body! Yes, so it is:—the vanity of human things is visible even in my own person. I experience every day how uncertain my bodily health is. The older I grow the more do my weaknesses accumulate. I am no longer so full of vigour, so blooming, so tranquil, and of such lively faculties as I was a few years ago. New symptoms, to which I have been hitherto a stranger, and which make me sensible of the approaching ruin of my dwelling of the flesh, come daily upon me. I tremble already as I anticipate, in thought, the numerous maladies which demolish both health and life. And which of them is reserved for me? I ask the question in vain. Uncertain, however, as I am, in regard to this one point, I may still easily convince myself that sooner or later my health will be quite cut down, and that also to me the saying will be applicable: "He bloomed like a flower in the field; but the wind hath passed over him, and he is no longer there."

These thoughts press upon me as I contemplate my body. As often as I regard it, I see a building threatened with overthrow, and a flower which soon fades. How can I, therefore, presume upon either my health, my strength, or my cheerfulness of mind? How can I be so impatient under the infirmities which are inseparable from my mortal frame? How can I think so little about death, of which my corporeal state so impressively reminds me? How can I be so indifferent to the safety of my soul, the perfections of which alone can indemnify me for every evil? No; this must be my chief solicitude, that among the numerous shocks that my bodily health receives, I may maintain the healthfulness of my soul. Then may my body continue weak and fragile; I shall find in my immortal part advantages that will suffice to

afford me quiet and consolation under all the imperfections of my corporeal one.

AUGUST 29.

Consolation of living under the Government of God.

What would become of my heart, if I dared not to rely in full confidence on Him who can protect me by his omnipotent arm, and guide me to eternal salvation—to the felicity of heaven; if I dared not, in filial security and in filial love, name thee, thou Lord of the universe, as my Father; if I had not thy promise, in which thou sayest I will neither forsake thee nor forget thee? Let what storms there will arise; let what darkness there will encompass me, thou art still my God. I call to thee, and then the storms abate,—the darkness vanishes. When I find myself disappointed in my hopes by the world, when my friends abandon me, and my trust in men bitterly deceives me, then I am cheered by the belief that thou art my God, my never delusive reliance, my rock, and my inheritance. What have I therefore to fear? Can the Almighty be vanquished? Can man resist thy all-ruling power?

Thou art my God:—each of the seraphim boasts of this, that thou art his God: and I also boast of the same with joyful heart. My God, my renown, my salvation! others may vaunt of what they will; others may embolden themselves with earthly things; others may set their trust on riches, and numerous friends and patrons. I renounce all that is mundane, and exult only in my God. Though death should take away from me every other support, and tear from me that which I most love, I should still retain in my God an invariable property. This connexion would continue firm when all other connexions were severed. When all human objects perish for ever, I shall relinquish them with joy, and depart from the world with the triumphant words: Thou art my God, the rock on which I trust. Let me regard the extent of my happiness:—I have all that is worthy of possession, for thou art my God.

In this faith I can expect, during the progress of my existence, nothing but welfare and blessing. What can be wanting to my real happiness, if thou art my Father, my defender, the guide of my life? In thee will be fulfilled all the wishes which, at the dawn of this day, arise in my bosom. All-sufficient, everlasting God, be for ever my friend and my protector. Cast me not from thy presence, though by my sins I merit thy displeasure. Enter not into judgment with thy feeble child! Let me, in all circumstances, feel the influence of thy grace, and vouchsafe to me the blessing which I require both in time and in eternity. I sanctify myself to thee; I vow to thee, this morning, eternally to be thine Be thou my God and my help for ever and ever.

AUGUST 30.

Glory in having the Lord for our God.

I WILL disquiet myself about nothing, since I know that the counsel of my God is so wise and gracious. I will no longer blame the government of the Deity, which I can neither comprehend nor profoundly explore; no longer disturb myself by empty and useless cares. I will not complain, when my wishes remain unsatisfied, since even this denial may advance my happiness. I will resign myself to the will of the Lord, whose goodness is so great and so unchangeable! How fortunate am I that my defender, my supporter, my provider, is the Almighty himself. Granting that some calamities occur to me; wherefore shall these render me sad, since they are appointed to me by the wisest and best of beings. Truly nothing greater can be conceived than to exist under the superintendence of the living God. As little as a faithfully disposed father can render his own child unhappy, so little can God do so. Moreover as a father has compassion on his offspring, so has the Lord compassion on them that fear him.

I find numberless indications of the divine goodness, wisdom, and universal power, in the government of the world: how should I not then lift up my heart full of hope and affi-

ance to heaven? Why should I wring my hands in despair, as if there existed no God? I am a Christian; my soul feels love and confidence in him whose goodness and wisdom nature proclaims to me. All fear is dispelled, when I bethink me, that God himself is near to me even in the most hidden corner. I am solitary, and God is with me. I walk alone, and God accompanies me. I speak, I think, I am silent; and behold, God knows all my actions. Does an affliction occur to me; I make my lamentation to the Lord. Do I enjoy a gratification; I thank my heavenly Father for it. Do I weep; my tears are numbered. Do I sigh in secret; it is the Lord who hears my sighs. Am I exposed to countless dangers; it is the Lord who extricates me from them. Are all my friends torn from me; God always remains my best and most proved friend. Shall I at last die; the God who has done so much good in life will be gracious to me even in death.

With such agreeable hopes as the belief of an omnipotent Creator of heaven and earth inspires me with, I cannot otherwise than with tranquillity and resolution encounter all my destinies. I do not indeed know beforehand what events will this day happen to me; but this much I know, and that most certainly, that even this day will not be void of the proofs of God's goodness. These many days have I already lived, all of which have been signalized by beneficence and grace;—what else can I expect for the residue of my time? Lord, do thou only increase faith in my heart. Annihilate always more and more those cares, and that mistrust, which occasionally spring up in my breast. Under all circumstances let me keep thy wisdom and thy fatherly goodness before my eyes and in my heart, and assiduously watch over myself that I may not offend thee through my sins. With this disposition of mind I may cherish the consoling hope that thou lookest upon me with favour, and wilt this day crown me with new blessings. I commend myself to thy guidance and to thy grace. Be my God and my helper! I will trust in thee and hold thee for my strength. Preserve to me these sentiments, when thou at any time concealest thy countenance from me. Then also let me hope in thee, and follow confidently the course which thou commandest me to pursue, even though it should appear rough and unpleasant to me. The end will be a solace to all my woes.

AUGUST 31.

Time and Judgment.

How rapidly does my life glide away! Already another month is again sunk in the sea of oblivion. This is the common lot of all the days of man. One day chaseth another, one month yieldeth his place to the next. And this perpetual fluctuation will continue till at last there shall be no more time. However distant this final epoch may be in regard to the universe, it is yet very near in respect to me. As soon as I die, then for me is time at an end. Then I shall have no further opportunity of obtaining the grace and the love of God. With the close of this mortal life, the period of prayer, of conversion, and of hope will cease. In the moment of my death the term of my preparation for eternity is past. Time always flies further from me, but death comes daily and hourly closer to me. Judgment hastens always more towards me. Months and days of divine patience quickly disappear; and the last decisive day is at hand.

These are the considerations which the terminating day of this month most impressively recommends to me. How many thousands will this day be placed before the tribunal of God! And how, if I also should be in the number of the dying; if to me also the thunder-voice should resound in stunning accents: "Give an account of thy stewardship?" Ah! God, how sorrowful am I at this thought! What then would be my fate? I would resign myself into thy hands, thou eternal Judge: I would supplicate thee for the sake of Jesus to be gracious to me: I would pray thee not to be mindful of my squandered and slumbered days. But, perhaps, death may surprise me so unexpectedly, that I shall not have sufficient time to pray to thee, and to commend myself to thee. That petition which I would offer in my last hour, will I now this morning present to thee: Lord, reconciled gracious God! I give my spirit in charge to thy mercy. For Je us' sake I beseech thee be propitious to me, and have not heed to the sins of my past life. Teach me the wisdom to employ all the precious moments which thou shalt

still bestow upon me, for my salvation, and to prepare my soul for heaven. Give me strength to follow the Master to whom I belong, and who is gone before me to make ready for me the everlasting abode. Soon will days, months, years, and all the remaining fragments from eternity be re-absorbed; and bear me along with them into the gulf of eternity itself. O! that this eternity may be a blessed one!

Everlasting God! thou canst fulfil this the most important of all wishes. My life may be as grievous as it will: if eternity prove but happy to me, then shall I bless my former misery, and with thankfulness and joy look back to my elapsed days.

SEPTEMBER 1.

Incitements to an entire Reliance on God.

How many summonses do I daily receive to yield myself up unconditionally to the wisdom and the fatherly goodness of my God! Every respiration might remind me of this duty, and each prolongation or rescue of my life might inculcate the important obligation of resigning myself in complete reliance to his care! But how little have I considered this! How seldom have I thanked him for it! How often have I grieved him in return for his graciousness, and ascribed to the patronage of men that which was his work alone! I have often attributed the prosperity which I enjoy to my own talents, and my safety from dangers to my own watchfulness, and forgotten that a higher hand is spread over me for my protection. Yet frequently have I with all my foresight approached to the brink of destruction. And whence comes it, that I am this moment living, and am able to praise the goodness of my God?—Lord, whatever I am is thy gift: the spirit by which I turn my thoughts to thee, my tranquillity of mind, whatever till this day I have been able to effect are all thy goodness.

O! with what shame do I now perceive that I have frequently received the greatest gifts of thy bounty without

either gratitude or love; that I never yet with ardent emotion recognised the especial blessing which was imparted to me in every peaceful night, on awaking from its indulgence, —the benefit of thy almighty defence, of thy compassionating tenderness, of thy skilful solicitude. And yet this benefit is so invaluably great, yet the refreshment which thou suppliest to thy creatures in sleep is so highly deserving of thanks, yet the blessing of thy protection is never more visible than in the undisturbed repose of the hours of darkness.

Strengthen me, O thou who art the author, at once, and the perfect finisher of faith, strengthen me in faith, that through me also thy name may be glorified. I will extol it, I will publish to my brethren what thou hast done for me. O! may all who as yet know thee not, choose thee for their king, and desire to stand under thy gracious sceptre; may all sinners be constrained to fall down at thy feet and confess—It is good to be a Christian, and to be engaged in the service of a Master who is himself love! Before thee, O Lord, before thy eyes will I walk throughout this whole day. Remind me of thee, if I should in any way forget thee; hold me up when I stumble; raise me again when I fall; and let me find thy help when I seek it. Let me live in thy fear, die in thy grace, and hereafter make my resurrection into thy glory. Yes, my Father, my great stay, my commiserator, my comfort, let me, as thy pilgrim, and as thy subject citizen, be commended to thy governing vigilance. Only be thou not terrible to me O thou who art my refuge in time of need!

SEPTEMBER 2.

God's fatherly Care and Affection.

Can anything be easily imagined more tender than the heart of a fond mother, who, then even when all are abandoned to repose, keeps unwearied vigils for her weak, helpless babe, and with the dawning morn directs her first thoughts to its welfare? How anxiously does this maternal solicitude search into each infant want, and recommence, as it were, every new day its provident cares! The child knows nought of this

life's sorrows, but rests tranquil and secure from all unhappiness while nestled on its parent's bosom. And wherefore then do I despond, since my heavenly Father watches over me yet more carefully—loves me yet more dearly: since he himself has promised never to forsake or abandon me—since every night of rest convinces me that he guards me with his omnipotent protection? O, my soul, whence springs thy mistrust, which thus at the first flush of each returning day arises anew within thee? Whence flows that timorous dread which thus disquiets thee, and so embitters thy abode in this world? Do not they originate in thy trusting not to God, and more regarding thy own griefs than thy Father's love-o'erflowing heart.

Yes, my merciful Father, ashamed and penitent I must confess before thee, that hitherto my confidence in thee has been no filial and joyful confidence. Thou hast bestowed upon me proofs enough of thy attention and protection. But seldom have I observed them; or if they were remarked by me, I have instantly forgotten them again. Hadst thou, compassionate Parent, so acted towards me, what would now have been my condition? Where should I have now been? Should I this day have lifted up my heart to thee in gladness, or have praised thy mercy towards me?

Pardon, pardon me my ingratitude, and withdraw not from me the treasure of thy grace. I have little acknowledged that it is thou who hast maintained for me the perfect enjoyment of all my senses, and my nobler faculties. But what were I, if thou shouldst withdraw from me these precious gifts? How truly pitiable are many who often move before my eyes, less favoured than I am in these essential blessings! These might well instruct me, through their misery, how great my privileges are. To thee my God and benefactor, shall my senses and the faculties of my soul be consecrated. My understanding shall meditate thy ways, admire thy exalted attributes, and glorify thy name, which alone is great. Agreeably to thy designs, will I employ all the senses with which thou hast gifted me, and of which, through thy mercy, I have still the use. Thy renown shall be my peculiar occupation and my chief delight.

With these resolutions I begin the present day. Grant me energy to fulfil them, and teach me to do according to

thy pleasure, that my conscience may not accuse me in the evening. Withdraw not from me the continuance of those blessings, of which my foolish heart has not hitherto been sufficiently sensible, which it has employed not faithfully and wisely enough, nor retained and cherished assiduously enough. Hear even yet on the brink of the grave, when I depart into eternity, hear then the last petition of thy child: Lord, thou art my shield, my salvation, my boast; receive me into thy adoption!

SEPTEMBER 3.

Reflections on our mortal Dissolution.

Every day I receive new cause and new incitement to busy myself with the thoughts of death, and I never want occasions to render the remembrance of dissolution lively in my soul. Each dawn proclaims to me my end. Every morning I may say to myself, I have now again one day less to wander through the world, and one obligation more to redouble my industry in the work of my amendment, since the sum of my years is abridged. And what do shortening days say to me but this truth: "Man, thy time is brief, and it flieth quickly!" Wherever I cast my eyes on this stage of incessantly shifting scenery, I find on all sides change, evanescence, and decay. All things in nature proclaim to me my perishable condition; but yet more strongly do the weakness of my body, the diminution of my powers, and the graves of beloved friends who have died in the bloom of their age, remind me of my approaching decease, and everywhere do memorials of those who have sunk into their long sleep meet my observation. I cannot regard the house in which I dwell without being silently told of death. Others have inhabited it who are now no more; and in a short time, I shall make place for new possessors. Wherever I go, I tread on the bones of the dead. And who knows how near I myself may be to those dead whom I so much loved in their life?

I will not let these contemplations depart from my thoughts, for they are able to make me wise for eternity; but will reflect upon my mortality as often as the world besieges me with

its seductive charms—as often as the destructive instigations of avarice, of ambition, or of pleasure awaken in my heart—as often as duty demands from me any greater than ordinary sacrifice—as often as God's inscrutable decrees burden my soul with any heavy suffering. For what can render me more humble, more watchful, and more comforted than the thought of death, and of the life of retribution into which I shall pass through death. But thou knowest my heart, O God; thou knowest how it still struggles with the fear and with the terror of death. Thou knowest how disciplined I am to think of my mortality. Sustain me, therefore, with thy strength, and replenish me with heavenly thoughts.

The more acquainted I become with death, the more acquainted shall I be with my true happiness. I have no cause to fear that the consideration of death will embitter my life; it will rather sweeten it, and teach me to enjoy the pleasures of this world with wisdom. And at last I shall obtain that blessed frame of mind, which will render me at all times, and under all circumstances, ready to die joyfully. And should I accomplish this, I shall gain inexpressible tranquillity of soul.

SEPTEMBER 4.

Prayer for God's Compassion and Protection.

Thou Being of all beings, behold I am dust, but thou hast formed my spirit for eternity! Have compassion upon me! From my pride and levity, from my indolence, from my wicked heart, preserve me, Lord my God, through the support of thy Holy Spirit.

From all rebellion against thee, from all enmity to my brethren, from the poison of the scoffers of thy word, from the darkness of superstition, preserve me, Lord my God! From too strong temptations, from the death of the soul, and from eternal death, preserve me, thou Lord of my life!

Lord! Lord God! merciful and gracious, faithful and patient, maintain thy invisible church through thy unsearchable but Divine and Almighty providence. Awaken from their

perdition the yet unconverted sinners, and those who, after conversion, have again fallen off. Let thy foes yet in the season of their grace turn back to thee, let them hasten and save their souls.

Teach me to be evermore mindful of my calling to celestial felicity, that my heart may not be lost for heaven, through foolish attachment to the things of this world, and the joys of the earth. Let thy word be a lantern to my feet, my light in every dark way. Be thy word my comfort when I suffer; my support when I totter; my strength when I grow feeble. Keep me true to this holy word. Do thou thyself carry me through the narrow gate to everlasting life. Let me believe it with sure trust, that I may walk in the straight path to eternal life. Let me, through many a dear experience, learn how light thy load, how soft thy yoke is. When it is too hard for me, or when I really take thy cross upon me and follow thee, powerfully convince me that the way in which thou guidest me to immortality is the best. O! that I might love thee, who did first love me, and wast for me obedient unto death. O! that I might love thee with all my soul, with all my heart, and with all my faculties! O! that I might love also, as well as myself, all my brethren, for whom, even as for me, thou wast obedient unto death.

Let me look up to thee, as the beginner and the perfecter of faith. Help me to fight, to struggle, and to conquer. Help me to love my foes; to bless them that curse me; to pray for them that wrong and persecute me. Let me be in all things perfect as thou wast. Have compassion, my God, on all my brethren. Hear the desires of all the wretched, who this day cry out to thee in their afflictions, and release them from their evils. Let this day be for all my friends and all who belong to me, a blessed day.

O! eternal God, have compassion upon me! Lord, Lord, have compassion upon me! Father and Creator, have compassion upon me! Lord thou Son of God! Mediator of the world, have mercy upon me! Spirit of the Father and the Son, have mercy upon me!

SEPTEMBER 5.

Retrospect of Life.

REVERT, O my spirit, to the former period of thy life: look down from the summit which thou hast attained, upon that friendly vale of childhood, where innocence and love were thy faithful companions, when thou knewest not yet the cares of existence, and feltest not its pains. Think with thankfulness and emotion of the innumerable joys with which God then provided for thy welfare, and of the countless dangers out of which his compassionate and protecting love so beneficently rescued thee. Let thy feelings become loudly expressive of gratitude, while thou confessest: Lord, I am not worthy of the mercy and truth which thou hast hitherto evinced towards me. Life and every blessing hast thou bestowed upon me, and thy providence has preserved my breath. But in vain do I seek, guided by my remembrance, to review the series of the benefactions of my God: I cannot discover their beginning. I lay in slumber, and was not conscious of my own being; on the bosom of my mother whom I knew not, encompassed by love and truth, in lamentable necessity of aid did I then lie when I was consecrated to God, when I was received into the holy covenant of the Redeemer. For years did the true unwearied love of my celestial Father,—which often in the levity and blindness of my youthful heart, I returned with ingratitude, and distressed and vexed—guide and protect, form and instruct me. When I at length grew ripe for reflection and consideration, when I attained the inestimable blessing of being able to perceive in the light of Christianity my dignity and my destination, when my spirit exalted itself to the Lord, and my soul rose to him in prayer, how rich was I then in the greatest blessings of God! how did my soul elevate itself from one ascent to another, unto still greater perfection! how happy was I through the knowledge of the love of God, my heavenly Father, and through belief in his Only-begotten, whom he also sent for my salvation!

This salvation, in which my soul is made a participator, will I acknowledge so long as I live, with the most thankful heart; I will not cease to praise God's goodness, and to love

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the Father who first and so highly loved me. My life shall manifest that I know how to value the blessings of the gospel; and that these glad tidings of great joy have likewise been salutary for my amendment and sanctification. The worth which I have obtained as a disciple of Jesus, never will I sport with through unconsciousness, forgetfulness of God, or inconstancy of mind: my conduct shall aspire at heaven, my soul shall be devoted to Jesus, and my sole endeavour shall be directed to that which is honest, chaste, and commendable. For an eminent pattern of the purest and most steadfast piety stands before my eyes in the life of my Saviour; I will be such in sentiment as he was, will live as he lived, die as he died, with an undefiled, faithful, and devout heart: especially will I endeavour after the things above, that I may one day enter into the glory of the Lord and hear his call: "Approach thou blessed of the Lord, receive the kingdom which is assigned to thee, be happy in the presence of thy God, and praise him with all the company of the perfect and the glorified in eternity."

SEPTEMBER 6.

Awakening from Death.

From every returning morning, a new period of trial, of misery, and of care, dates its commencement. To behold another morning is nothing else than to enter anew upon the toilsome race to the appointed goal, again to encounter the world in contest, again to become subject to the temptations of sin. O! what a transporting morning will that be for me, when I shall awake from the slumber of death, and that era begin, which will no longer be capable of being computed by years, and which will have no other measure save eternity. With what ecstasy shall I then pronounce the words which now occasion me so much sorrow, the words of the angel: "Time will be no more!"

This is the season of uncertainty and weakness, there they will both for ever have terminated. I shall be no more liable to folly and error. I shall regard everything in the light of

God, and see face to face him who is the origin of the universe and the eternal truth. This is the season of temptation and danger. When I shall once be beyond the boundaries of this visible world, and elevated above all its deceptions, I shall have no further peril to fear for my soul; the darkness of the future will no longer afflict me, the power of sensuality no longer hold dominion over me, death no more menace me with its frightful sway; then will my fight be ended, my victory obtained, my felicity interminable. The period of my separation from God will finish on that blessed morning, when I shall come forth out of my grave to the everlasting life of infinite felicity. I shall myself be no longer obstructed in my sacred and heavenly exercises by any foe of God and of his grace. The term of my fatiguing labours and of my sufferings will then cease. I shall rest eternally from all occupations which are enjoined with hardship and weariness:—the sources of pain will be dried up for ever.

"It is finished!" exclaimed the Redeemer on the cross. "It is finished," I too may hereafter say in the hour of death, and at the close of this mortal period. But in order to be able truly to say so, I must accomplish with the most upright fidelity whatever is incumbent upon me in this life. And to this mode of acting even the present morning must prove for me an incitement. I am yet in the world, where I must struggle with much and endure much. O God, teach me wisely to dispose of my short but important time. If I am convinced that eternity will follow this life, wherefore do I not use all my efforts to employ it immediately to my real welfare. To delay my amendment till future hours is dangerous: to-day is the right time to prosecute that great work, on which the felicity of eternity will depend. O! how happy shall I be if I prudently anticipate the uncertain number of my days, and prepare myself early for eternity! How happy shall I be, if, when the time which is ordained me to live and to suffer is ended, I shall be able triumphantly to say, "It is finished!"

SEPTEMBER 7.

The true Value of terrestrial Things.

I LIVE in a world in which the goodness and the love of God towards me display themselves in a thousand different ways. He has adorned and filled the earth with innumerable gifts of goodness. It is his good will that we should be happy in the enjoyment of his blessings:—for this reason has he constituted our senses so wonderfully, that taste, hearing, and sight, are for us exhaustless sources of gratification and delight; and for this reason, likewise, nature, which is so magnificent, is ordered constantly to furnish new joys to our hearts, to pour out her stores before us, and present to us the noblest monuments of God's benignity. But since this mortal clime, in which I dwell, affords me no complete felicity, it cannot be my real and proper country, nor my permanent station. No; this world is a school in which I am to be qualified for a higher destination, a place of trial which is to make me fit for heaven. Therefore are its possessions and joys so transitory; therefore is the happiness which it offers so imperfect and so easily disturbed; therefore I ought not to be fond of the world or of what is in it.

How happy might I yet be were I to act according to these principles, and begin with the present day, to judge more rationally of the pleasures of life, and more correctly to estimate their value. Ah! my heart is still too strongly fettered to the earth! I feel how much dominion that which is earthly has over me; I feel how difficult, how impossible, it is for my corrupted heart to renounce the world, to limit my predilection for worldly vanities, and to bend all my inclinations to the possessions of eternity. How should I murmur against God were he to withdraw from me those pleasures which I deem essential to my happiness! How comfortless should I become if he took from me the friends whom I cherish, the wealth which I have acquired, the privileges of rank of which I am so proud, or the life to which I am so excessively attached. My behaviour would be far more consistent with reason if I prized all things according to their absolute worth and their intended purposes. I should live much more con-

tentedly if my heart were less attached to terrestrial objects; I should be more patient in my sufferings if I entertained more accurate notions in regard to them; I should have less horror of death if I loved the world less.

But it is necessary that I should adopt this mode of thinking which can alone render me fit to become a citizen of heaven; I therefore implore thee, my God! teach me to contemplate the world and that which it contains, as a Christian. The earth is sufficient to excite my desires, but not sufficient to satisfy them. It is rich enough to afford me recreation, but not rich enough to bestow upon me happiness. My land of home is in heaven, and the only way that leads to it passes over the earth. Here must I seek for happiness and joy—there shall I find them!

SEPTEMBER 8.

Advantages bestowed upon us in preference to our Fellow-creatures.

WITHOUT termination and without end are thy blessings towards me, most affectionate and most bountiful Father! I make this confession with gladness, since the daily experience of thy bounty renders it to me a most sacred duty. O! what hast thou hitherto done for me—what dost thou not still do. How greatly by thy mercies hast thou distinguished me before so many thousands! How many of my brethren have, according to thy unsearchable counsel, been carried off during the past night out of this life of trial! For me thou hast preserved my life and my health. How many have hailed the present day with tears and sighs! I can welcome it with thankfulness and pleasure. How many has thy hand smote, that they feel pains and infirmities! I, through thy grace, am in health and free from ailment. How many scarcely possess wherewith to still their hunger and thirst! I find sufficient for my maintenance, and even enjoy a state of ease. How many are persecuted, slandered, and despised! To me thou hast sent friends and benefactors. But where shall I select words to express the felicity which I owe to thee?

Without limit, without end, are thy benefits towards me, most loving and most benignant Father.

Yet have I deserved that God should have bestowed so many blessings upon me in preference to others? Is there anything in me which makes me more worthy of such a superiority than those among my brethren, who live in sorrow and care? Have I more faith, more love, more godliness than my fellow-mortals? If I regard myself impartially, my heart must say: "No, I have not deserved to be the object of the numerous evidences of favour with which the Lord has enriched me. All his favours are nothing else than the free-grace tokens of his compassionate love." But wherefore does God so distinguish me? The Lord purposes to encourage me, and bind me in duty by his kindness to penitence, and to true solicitude for the reformation of my heart. Yes, this morning which I behold, this my contented breast, this sound body, these earthly blessings, this protection which God vouchsafes to me, are pure invitations to me to learn the necessity of my amendment. Those chastisements, under which my brethren suffer, are also exertions of the same grace, and are to instigate me to seek God and to turn to him.

But can then my life serve as a proof of these blessed effects of the divine grace? Or is it rather a proof of my obstinate heart? Ah! God, how can I do otherwise than humbly confess that thy goodness has not produced in me the end for which it was bestowed? Thou hast endeavoured to bring me to thyself through thy goodness, but I have not followed thy benign attractions. Thou hast manifested to me thy righteousness in others, but I have observed it without emotion and without improvement. Lord, spare me, and punish me not as my inconsistency of mind and my fickleness deserve. Make me more faithful to my conscience and my duty, and teach me thyself to act according to thy pleasure. I vow to thee with a sincere heart, that I will watch and pray, that I may fall not into temptation; and thy Spirit will support my weakness.

SEPTEMBER 9.

The Grace and Influence of Prayer.

I AM then always in the happiest and most blissful state of mind, when I have commenced the day with reverential prayer. Therefore do I now pray to thee, my God; and while I pray, I feel how highly favoured I am beyond so many thousands, who have beheld this morning without thanking thee for it, without entreating for thy blessing! O what a great incomprehensible benefit is granted to me, that I can at all hours approach thy throne, and under all circumstances seek thy countenance! How soon would my heart lose its noblest and most exquisite feelings, if devotion did not awaken them, and nourish them, if it did not renovate and enliven the consciousness of my worth within me, if prayer did not humanize me! All the impulses of brotherly love would fail, as well as all the influence of the fear of God, if prayer did not remind me of what God is, and of what I myself am. I should think less of heaven, if I did not sometimes lift up my hands towards it. I should become entirely the prey of sin, if thy Spirit, O God, especially in my retired worship, did not operate upon my heart. I thank thee for so many moments which, through prayer, have passed away among blessings. For this morning's devotion also do I present to thee my thanks, O thou who hearest my petitions.

Carefully will I employ the happiness of my solitude. Now while my thoughts are not yet entangled in the embarrassments of the world, I will turn my whole soul to thee, and adore thee in spirit and in truth. God, thou seest with a glance the cares and the wishes of my heart. To thee all my wants and all my necessities are known. To thee is it also known how ardently my heart desires to find rest, and to become worthy of thy grace. Ah! Lord, look down then graciously upon me! for I am a sinner. This is the summary of all my misery and trouble. Thou who justifiest sinners, most holy Redeemer, free me through thy blood, from the guilt and merited punishment which I have drawn upon myself through my sinful life. What avails existence,

when it passes under a disquieted conscience? what to me are all the pleasures of earth, if I must live in constant expectation of thy vengeance? what joy could this new day afford me, if I were deprived of the assurance, that I shall spend it under thy favour? But how can I be assured of thy favour, since I myself rouse thy chastising equity through my sinfulness? O God! have mercy upon me, and have compassion upon me a sinner. Have compassion upon me, when I kneel before thee overwhelmed with repentance, and offer up to thee my vows of alteration of conduct. Reject me not, when I entreat thee for the support of thy Spirit. Accompany me with thy fatherly blessing, and with thy forbearance, in the days which I have still to live, and strengthen me in the hour when I shall die and appear before thy judgment-seat.

SEPTEMBER 10.

God's Indulgence and Readiness to forgive leads the Christain to confess his Errors, and to seek the Divine Aid.

Praised be thy name, thou God of all mercy, that thou pardonest our crimes, and for the sake of thy Son's atonement art gracious to sinners, when they draw near to thee in profound repentance. Who is like Jehovah, so full of long-suffering, so patient, so inclined to forgiveness? Men are severe and cruel, and implacable: they shut up their hearts even against the unfortunate, when the latter approach them, though it may be with the strongest claim. But thou, Infinite Being, blessest and lovest even the unworthy. If I knew not this, I could not dare to present myself before thee, to take refuge with thee, and to supplicate thee for indulgence and favour. For with what contrition must I confess, that my offences against thee have deprived me of all right to call myself thy child. My life exhibits to my view a long series of transgressions, and in order to determine the value of my past days, I can say nothing further, than that the greater part of them have been lost.

How can I make this confession without at the same time vowing that I will labour with earnestness and zeal for my own improvement, that I will not flee the Christian fight, but manfully encounter temptation! Preserve me, O God, from the misfortune of continuing in the slumber of iniquity, and dreaming away that time which is destined for my conversion. This morning is a citation to me to awaken, and become better. I must not allow it to elapse unprofitably. I must listen to the voice that calls me, I must be obedient to the love which allures me to itself; to this end, O God, let thy Spirit also in this dawning hour work upon my heart, and let my heart itself be savingly startled and alarmed. Discover to me all the offences which I have committed, and represent to me in their most lively colours those unknown and unrepented sins, which may tend most to redouble the agony of my conscience. And let me experience no alleviation till I have vanquished my own heart, and found that gentle peace in my soul, which is able to preserve me for everlasting life

And if I then give myself over to thee, O thou God of compassion, deign to grant me thy gracious acceptance. When, confiding in the mediation of Christ, I supplicate for thy grace, let me find it, and become a participator of that forgiveness which is the sole comfort of my life. Everything in the world will become unfelicitous to me, if I do not obtain thy propitious regard; and my afflictions will be still more unsupportable to me, if my conscience loads me with reproaches, and my own heart occasions me sorrow. But everything will promote my real good if I am in unity with thee.

What can I therefore desire more advantageous for my well-being this day, than that thou, O God, mayst take away from me my sins? Others may devote their wishes to riches, honour, and the rest of the gratifications of this life: my wish, my happiness, my riches, my honour, are the forgiveness of my sins.

SEPTEMBER 11.

Man's Attachment to the Things of this World.

How easily is my weak heart carried away by its love of terrestrial things, and the vain joys of this world; and how easily does it forget, that even the most innocent things may become dangerous, if I rashly yield myself up to them! After I have already had so much experience of this truth, it is certainly time that I should be sensible to my own weakness, and more cautious in temporal enjoyment. But how firmly is my heart still chained down by terrestrial bonds! Every day gives me new proofs of this slavery. Cares, riches, and pleasures, these are the objects which divert my thoughts from their right channel, and so powerfully hurry me along in their stream. And what is the result? A melancholy stupefaction of my better feelings! Ah! hence it is that even the most serious things have no influence over my heart; that I remain unaffected when religion ought to move me; that I am sad, when the consideration of eternity ought to enrapture me. Hence springs that levity of my heart, that indifference in regard to the real welfare of my soul. Hence originates that softness which makes me shrink to take up the cross of Jesus, to deny myself, and in this disposition to follow him. Hence will death be so bitter to me, when it shall at once tear from me all my beloved idols, to which my heart is so deeply devoted.

This morning is the fittest time for the indulgence of these contemplations. The less I am yet discomposed by distractions and anxieties, the more easy is it for me to collect my mind, and to employ its meditations with those things on which the din of the world leaves me so little leisure to think. Be it so; I will here in my solitude entertain those ideas which are appropriate to my real destination. My heart shall be engaged with thee, my God; thou shalt now be the sole subject of its love, of its desires, and of its hopes. I will represent to myself in its most glowing tints the greatness of that happiness which I enjoy through depending upon thee, and through being thy child, and a redeemed servant of Jesus. I will reiterate the resolution to be unal-

terably dedicated to thee, and to let neither the joys nor the vexations of life avert me from thee. I will with lively devotion consider the wisdom and goodness with which thou hast hitherto guided me, the numerous testimonies of grace which from the first moment of my life to the present hour, have been condescendingly vouchsafed to me, and the inexpressible indulgence with which thou, O Lord, hast borne with me in my sins. I will picture to myself in their strongest light, that most extraordinary change for me which I have to expect in death and in eternity, and that felicity which is the portion of the pious, and hence will I derive the most efficient motives of godliness. I will make a league with my senses, that they shall not seduce me and plunge me into destruction.

But what will all these good purposes profit if thou dost not thyself rule my heart, direct my inclinations, and sanctify each impulse of my bosom. However determined and resolved I may now appear to myself, as easily shall I be overpowered if I venture into the world without thy support. But with thee, my God, I shall be strong to conquer the world, to despise what is earthly, and to embrace that which is celestial.

SEPTEMBER 12.

Futile Cares with which Man idly torments himself.

I KNOW that God's wisdom rules my destiny, that his omnipotence defends me, that his goodness blesses me, and yet I cannot repress the cares of my heart, but still think with anxiety of the future, and am more inclined to fear than to hope. I often strain all my ingenuity to seek out for myself causes of sadness, and explore the furthest points of my life in order to discover sources of distress. I should be much more tranquil if I confined myself to the present, and abandoned futurity entirely to the government of the omniscient God; if I availed myself of my former experience of God's providence, in order on all occasions to draw from it comfort and quiet. But my perverted heart labours for its own un-

easiness, and voluntarily augments its own afflictions. To my disgrace I must acknowledge that I have already squandered many a morning hour in such vexatious thoughts. Cares were my first sensations when I awoke from sleep, though assuredly by right thanks ought to have been so.—How will it succeed with me to-day? I frequently inquire of myself, What calamity will this day fall upon me? What sickness will sooner or later extend me on the couch of death? What species of death will carry me off? Who knows whether I may not lose my life suddenly, or by some fatal accident? Ah! how wretched shall I be, if fire, if the wickedness of men, or any other unexpected misfortune, deprive me of all my property!

With such and even other disquieting imaginations do I often awake. And even to-day my soul is not entirely free from such anxieties. Foolish creature that I am! why do I thus torment myself without reason? O how deserving of pity must I appear under these circumstances to the angels, who are, perhaps, secret eye-witnesses of my unbelieving sentiments! How deserving of commiseration must I appear to my own understanding, since I am so weak as to create griefs for myself where no cause exists! Cease, corrupted heart, to disturb thyself, and to dishonour God! Banish all thoughts which instil into thee unbelief and despondency. Cling, cling to God, and be not dispirited. Embitter not further by thy own fault that life which is already in itself so full of troubles. Enjoy, thankfully and contentedly, that which God has apportioned to thee, and be joyou in hope. God will grant to thee that which thou desirest, provided thou art pious and satisfied. Be therefore solicitous above all things to become pious, and free thyself from fretful discontent. Expect always that which is the best and the most salutary, from thy Father, who is in heaven. Speak thus to thyself (God allows thee so to speak): How wonderfully and blessedly will the Lord also to-day lead me! How much good shall I also this day receive from him! I know that this day will be as little deficient in his acts of grace as my former days have been. I know in whom I believe; and the God in whom I believe is my Father, my Guide, my Benefactor. In his hand rests my fate. I will wholly resign it to him, and with the fullest submission ac-

cept everything from him, whether it be life or death. If I so thought, O! how contentedly, how happily might I live!

SEPTEMBER 13.

Friendship considered with reference to God.

WITHOUT friendship and the mutual affection of mankind, the world would be much more melancholy than it really is. But, without God, the most tender friendship would afford me no happiness, no consolation, no joy. Provided he be my friend, then am I, in all respects, happy. In him I find all that the inability of my friends prevent them from bestowing, and that comfort which is unknown to the world. In him I discover such a degree of love as infinitely surpasses even the fondest inclination of my fellow-mortals towards me. With him I find help in all the concerns and sorrows of this life. With him I find my happiness, both in days of gloominess and of serenity. He is my strength, my rock, my rescuer, and my fortress for ever. How great and how soothing have been the proofs of his goodness, so often as I have been compelled to contend with trouble! How often has his kindness come upon me by surprise—how often was his aid already present, while I yet pusillanimously indulged anxiety and fear! When all my friends become faithless to me, he is the proved friend, who remains as he is. Though all the assistance of my friends should be vain, his almighty arm would still be able to succour and to save me.

Led by the hand of this heavenly Friend, I now enter into the world. At his side I need fear nothing To him I may recommend all my concerns, and he is so gracious as to give heed to them. Though I were attended by whole armies of sincere friends, I could not be so tranquil as I now am, since I have this omnipotent Friend beside me. O! how greatly shall I, even this day, require his support! And therefore do I turn to thee, thou Friend of all the offspring of men, whom thy Son has reconciled to thee. Ah! I am an erring child; lead and guide me, therefore, my Father,

lest I run into a thousand mazes which will hurry me into destruction. Lead me, that I may not unhappily wander further astray; rescue me, that I may not be utterly lost in the delusive meanderings of my way. I am a foolish, ignorant mortal, and as much in want of good counsel as of aid; be thou, therefore, my counsellor. Perplexities may occur to me in my lifetime, which I shall not be able to unravel: do thou solve all my difficulties, and make the darkness which encompasses me clear. From thee I confidently expect that help which my friends cannot afford me. The greatest love I, however, expect from thee in death. When my friends shall hereafter surround the bed of my expiring agonies, incapable of any other effort save that of lamentation and mourning, then do thou enter into the midst of them, and let me feel the salvation and the comfort of thy death. I know not all the accidents that may happen to me, and in which thy assistance will be indispensable to me. But thou, Omniscient and Omnipresent, knowest:—how should I then fear them, or shudder at their anticipation? All-gracious God, do thou bless whatever love, friendship, and fidelity shall effect for me. Preserve for me those whom thou hast united to me as companions, my true and tried friends. Make this day a day of weal and joy for these upright souls. Be thou also a friend to them, even as they labour to be my friends. Finally, bring them and me into that assembly of those most friendly and most faithful spirits who have their union in heaven. There let us first fully taste true friendship, and become perpetually happy in its enjoyment.

SEPTEMBER 14.

An Address of Thanksgiving and universal Prayer.

Lord God, Father and Lord of my life! to thee belong majesty and dominion, glory, victory, and thanks. For all that is in heaven or on earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, and thou art exalted above all on earth. I give thanks to thee and celebrate thy glory. Thee fame and honour alone become; thou hast made the heaven, and the heaven of

heavens, with its host. Thou makest everything that lives, and the celestial armies worship thee. Life and blessings are the gifts which thou hast bestowed upon me, and thy care maintains my breath. Therefore I rejoice and am glad in thee, and praise thy name, thou Most High. For thy goodness stretches as widely as the firmament. Thou, O Guard of Israel, neither sleepest nor slumberest. How shall I recompense thee, O God, for all the benefits which thou dost to me? Thou hast kept me like the apple of thy eye, and permitted me to find protection and refuge under the shadow of thy wings. I have awoke in thy image. Thy mercy is even this morning renewed to me, and thy truth is great. To this new day, therefore, do I publish thy grace, that thou art so mighty, and dost good perpetually. Let my lips and my heart daily abound in thy applause, Lord, my God!

Direct me to-day, O Lord, so that, in all that I do, I may enjoy thy approbation, and not avert thy blessing from myself through my sins. Show me thy way, and conduct me in the right way. Let thy omnipotence be nigh to me, and defend me from every evil. Be friendly to me, and prosper the work of my hand; yea, the work of my hand wilt thou prosper. Fulfil all my wishes, when they accord with thy unerring designs, and be not far from me when I call upon thee in my difficulties. Strengthen me through thy Spirit in my battle against sensuality and sin. Command thy angels that they take charge of me in all my ways, and inspire me with heavenly thoughts, that they may have joy in me. Let the fear of thee be ever in my heart, that I may not follow my own counsel and the propensities of my bosom, but in all things hold thee before my eyes, the omnipresent God, and Judge of the living and the dead.

Diffuse thy name and thy kingdom over the earth. Protect thy church from all the assaults of her enemies, and thy worshippers from all the persecutions of the ungodly. Keep peace and security within our walls; confirm the prosperity and the happiness of our homes, and increase felicity in all families. When the wretched cry to thee, hear them: let the widows find friends and protectors, and the orphans nourishment and care. Rescue the souls of those who are in the peril of death. Listen to the sighs of the needy, and

procure right for those who suffer wrong. Fill all things that live with pleasure, and be the Father and the Benefactor of thy creatures. Yet what is this for which in the weakness of my heart I pray? Thou remainest in eternity what thou now art; and, as thy years admit of no end, so likewise thy goodness endures from everlasting to everlasting. Therefore must every distressed and sorrowful heart put trust in thee; for thou art kind towards all, and hast compassion on all thy works.

SEPTEMBER 15.

Awaking from Sleep.

I AWOKE from the refreshing slumber of a tranquil night. No: the power of my Maker awakened me. The whole creation yesterday vanished from my eyes and the sun went down to the west, and set; a dark veil concealed the face of nature; my body refused to me its service. I seemed, as it were, to die, though yet a certain feeling stirred within me. But now a potent force affects me: my eyes open to me new life, and receive anew the beams of light. At the command of the universal Author of being I rise from sleep as if out of my grave to renovated existence. What a wonder of Divine omnipotence is man when, with fresh strength and fresh consciousness of vital animation, he leaves his place of rest! Now I feel what the first man felt when thy word, Omnipotent, gave him life and breath. How can I still be inattentive to thy goodness, and doubt whether thou art my Creator, and whether I am daily created anew! Although invisible, thou standest daily before me, as thou didst before Adam; and daily awakenest me to a new life. But what species of new life! My ancestor was to live before thee in invulnerable innocence. He was to employ his life for the purpose to which thou hadst destined it, for the adoration of thy almightiness, and for the extending of thy fame among thy progeny. O! grant, through thy grace, that I may belong this progeny. Let me attain that destination for the sake of which thou so often reinvestest me with existence. When I first en-

tered into the world I could not stammer out thy praise. To-day I rejoice that I am free from this infirmity.

What can my first thoughts be, when I regard myself, except thanksgivings ? Even that I can think of these is thy work and thy praise, thou All-propitious ! Deep within my most sacred feelings hast thou prepared for thyself a service of praise. And this feeling of thy goodness shall all this day accompany me. It shall fortify me when I would become languid under the hardships of life. It shall be my guide, and my light in every dark passage of my earthly pilgrimage. Thus thou, thyself, strengthenest me, my Creator ! Thus thou art my life's comfort and guide ! Let me each day which thou grantest to me become wiser to do good, that I may not neglect the precious season of sowing seed for eternity, but collect a harvest of peace and joy for the evening of my time; and that even this day may bring me nearer to my happy destination, and be a blessed advance towards eternity.

I depend wholly on thy pity. Only grace, grace is it that I seek from thee, and on which I establish my prayer. O ! let me yet in thy love find my quiet and my felicity. If I am not loved by thee, then is life hateful to me, and the sight of this new day frightful. But render me, I entreat thee, worthy of thy love, and preserve me from all transgressions through which I may lose thy fatherly attachment. Lead me and instruct me in thy truth; for thou art my God :—I daily cling to thee.

SEPTEMBER 16.

The true Application of Life.

Thanks and praise be to thee, thou Preserver of my life ! To thee be my earliest feelings consecrated, thou beneficent Deity ! Nature rejoices around me in renewed existence. The heavens smile down upon the earth, again resplendent in renewed beauty. Why should not my heart feel grateful joy, when I consider what an invaluable blessing thou repeatest to me in giving back to me my life ! As I yesterday passed over a part of my journey to eternity, O ! so let me

not this day be weary. Thou leadest me according to counsel, and wilt at length take me up into thy glory. Or did I yesterday fall far behind in my course, O! then I may to-day with invigorated powers and a more chastened soul, search out again my way; and from the height to which I have attained, look round on that country at which I seek to arrive, and where I am to take up my permanent abode. This was thy wise view, O God, when thou didst grant me life. O! let me not disappoint this aim!

But how few men actually and indeed LIVE, although thou prolongest their years, and endowest them with vigour! How many permit themselves to be retarded in their road to heaven, at one time by the riot of those who accompany them, at another time by amusements, and not unfrequently by troubles! He only whom thou leadest reaches heaven in an even path. Him the world, with the tumult of its joys and and its business, disturbs not. He observes, as he passes by them, the vanities which offer to seduce them. He is not insensible, but he allows not himself to be wholly captivated and carried away by the gratifications of the world. Every morning he thinks of his exalted destination, and each time renews his vow to live before God, and to direct his efforts to that which is above. He constantly fixes his eyes on his everlasting country, and in common with his fellow-mortals pursues the journey which tends thither. Are any faint, he strives to keep them up: are any ignorant, he instructs them. Does he advance in his course in the sunshine of felicity, he is transported by the thought that the beatitude of heaven is infinitely greater. Does the sky become black, he is cheered by the conviction that his Guide will not forsake him.

With these sentiments I praise thee this day, O my Maker. Show me anew the way in which I ought to walk. Make me strong to fulfil my duties in this life, but strong also to reflect that I am not formed only for the present world. How manifold are these duties! How heavily will they press upon me if thou dost not sustain me! I ought to labour at thy work; I ought to accomplish the work of my salvation. Teach me, through thy Spirit, where I ought to be busy, and what I ought to neglect. Preserve my heart, when it has become firmer in goodness, and is thence sure of thy grace, from being lifted up with pride, and looking down con-

temptuously on fallen brethren, for even those enjoy thy love. Let me hasten to my end with the hope that I, and those who are with me, shall arrive triumphantly at the seat of eternal happiness, through Jesus Christ.

SEPTEMBER 17.

Thanksgiving for Repose during Sleep, and Health on Awaking.

Eternal Father of men! Creator, Supporter, and Ruler! worshipped by thy angels, praised by thy works, glorified by all nations! In the thanksgiving songs which now ascend to thee from the earth, one of thy created and redeemed mingles his hymn of adoration. Give ear to my voice, O thou, who listenest to the cry of the least of thy creatures. Who shall not exalt thee, most benignant Father? who shall not thank thee and proclaim thy glory? Each morning tells to the evening how noble art thou, through thy mightiness and love. To these alone I owe that a long night of pain has not tormented me, and the spectacle of the dawn terrified me. To these alone I owe that I am able to enjoy this new morning with renovated powers. With deep devotion do I thank thee, that thou daily magnifiest thy power in this world, daily prolongest the period of grace. But I have to thank thy goodness for a yet greater blessing, namely, that of being able to devote one day more to my amendment. Thou awakenest even sinners. How many might the last night have summoned to thy tribunal! The righteous and the sinful slumbered before thee, but thy sun arises alike on both.

O! be propitious to me, thou Most High! thou that callest to the sun, that he may give his light to the ends of the world To thee we may with joyful hope commend the happiness of the earth, and the happiness of those through whom the earth is dear to us. To thee, Omniscient are my wishes and the silent prayers, and the glad hopes of my heart completely known. But thou hast commanded that I should address myself to thee, and charge thee in lowly veneration with my own concerns, and those of my brethren. Therefore do

I come to thee with my prayer. But I fall trembling on my face before thee: for I am not worthy to pray to thee, nor to be favoured by thee. I have not deserved the mercy which thou hast hitherto shown to me. How many mornings do I now count, since thou didst first place me in this world! How many sorrows of the evening has the following day dispersed! How many joys has it restored to me! Daily dost thou open anew to me the way to heaven. But how frequently must I stumble, if I walked without thee! My reason, my heart, and my own virtue are weak and dubious guides. Do thou illumine my understanding, amend my heart, and strengthen my virtue. Wild and destructive passions often call my heart from thy blissful path: do thou keep them in restraint, and let me employ the affections of my bosom only to love thee and desire thee with ardour. Let me be connected in brotherly unity with my neighbour, and love him as uprightly as Jesus did his brethren. Let me direct all my steps towards eternity, with my regards fixed on thee and in faith in Jesus. And for my last hour I entreat thee, now while I still can entreat thee, let it not be terrible. Let me enter happily and gently into the other life, and receive the promise which thou hast made to thy faithful servants.

SEPTEMBER 18.

Contemplation of Christ's Agony.

With what feelings do I this day awake! In those same hours in which sweet sleep refreshed me, was Jesus seized by deadly agony. I arise from slumber to enjoy the goodness of my God, but he on that night had not where to lay his head except the Mount of Olives, down which his tears and blood-sweat flowed. On me the morning shines in its youthful beauty, while thou, O Holiest, wast judged as a criminal by the iniquitous, vilified by thy creatures, and sickened to the heart by the wickedness of thy foes and the infidelity of thy followers. Be ever present to me, thou frightful night! Float constantly before my eyes, thou horrible tribunal, in front of which my Jesus was compelled to stand! Accom-

pany me during the whole of this day in all my ways. Excite and teach me to be true to Jesus; and in following him to be zealous and unwearied, so shall I never lose myself in the unfortunate crowd of those who acknowledge him not as the Lord of the world, and yet feel his benefits, and see his judgments; so shall I never unite myself to that erring multitude who despise his sufferings, calumniate his death, or pass by with insensibility and forget his love. Ah! God preserve me from this unutterable misery! I will, with every hour which thou this day grantest to me, praise the death of my Redeemer by my piety and love. Not he—I, I ought to appear before that terrific judgment, I ought to endure that torture of the Olive Mountain and the cross; I ought to suffer death a thousand-fold, for the death on the cross; I ought to be forsaken of God, and for ever rejected by him. But thou, O Lord, didst lay my guilt and my curse on thy Son, that I might obtain sanctification and joy. O! be thou blessed to me, thou newly-arisen morning. This is the day of a second creation. The angels praise the first day of the world; but thee before the throne of the Lamb, millions of the righteous made perfect shall magnify and extol throughout the ages of eternity.

To thee, O Jesus, I commit my life and my well-being without anxiety. Thou who didst suffer and who died for me, how couldst thou abandon thy care for me? Since thou hast done so much beyond conception for my soul, how canst thou do less for my earthly necessities? No, merciful Jesus, I can expect everything from thee, however great it may be, since thou hast already granted to me the greatest, which is heaven. Still vouchsafe to me the grace, that I may constantly adhere to thee in faith. Remind me incessantly of thy death and thy afflictions, and let them become for me the strongest instigations to godliness, in like manner as they afford to me the most undeceiving hope of blessedness. Should I be inclined, and, alas! I am too much inclined, to hold dear the lusts and sins of the earth, then may thy sufferings affright me, and thy anguish restrain me! Under the sad yet soothing contemplation of thy passion, of thy love on the cross, of thy wounds, of thy death pangs, and of thy glorious consummation, let the day pass away from me: and my life, my sufferings, and my death, be rendered sweet to me through the same means.

SEPTEMBER 19

The Departure of the Beauties of Summer.

WHERE is that enlivening verdure with which the fields were lately adorned? Where are the flowers which with their balmy scent refreshed my vital spirits? Where are the trees in the shade of which I so gladly loitered? Scarcely a trace of them remains; all are vanished. Was so much beauty, so much of the enchanting and the ravishing united, so much pomp and majesty only for this, that it might flourish so short a time, and nought be left of it? Here thou seest, my soul, what thou hast to promise thyself from the possessions and joys of this life. Couldst thou indeed require a more striking image of the perishableness of all earthly things? Will thy treasures, thy distinction, thy felicities, as thou namest them, will they last longer than the grass, which is green to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven? Though even that which thou termest happiness consisted not in imagination, (for of this thou art hard to let thyself be convinced,) though it could even subsist with virtue, (for of this thou believest thyself assured,) be at least impressed with the conviction of this truth—that the advantages of a moment deserve not the slightest esteem, in competition with that wealth of which the duration is eternal. Wherefore dost thou then distress thyself, because the gifts of fortune are wanting to thee? Why art thou proud because thou holdest them? Why dost thou mourn because thou hast lost them? Exalt thyself to nobler sentiments, and learn to know the way of righteousness, which is alone worthy to be prized above all else.

Yes, let this be the purpose of the day, and may I execute it with strictest fidelity and most sacred zeal. I will not let myself be fettered by the violence of my senses, nor become a slave to vice. Those possessions which God bestows upon me, I will employ to my own service and for my neighbour's utility. No one in need of help shall go away from me without comfort, no one that is hungry without food, no one that is naked without clothing. No opportunity of performing good, no incitement to self-improvement which God may

vouchsafe to me, shall depart this day unused. This is the only means to obtain and to secure to myself a property in heaven. For such conduct is with justice styled collecting celestial treasures, which moths and rust cannot consume, and which no robber can steal from me. Thus I may on the present day suffer the greatest loss that fancy can imagine; but in my conscience I shall always find an indemnification that will reward me for every misfortune. And if I keep the true value of mortal things constantly in view, I shall so much the more ardently long after those gifts of grace and those heavenly blessings, which are far more constant, and more replete with happiness, than all temporal prerogatives can be. O Lord, I suppliantly entreat thee, implant, through thy Spirit, these sentiments in my heart, and point out to me the path that leads to heaven. Then shall I possess an epitome of all felicity, and even in this world enjoy in advance a previous feeling of eternal blessedness.

SEPTEMBER 20.

Proof of Man's destined Immortality.

I PROCEED continually further in my career! I advance always nearer to death and eternity. Again, I have left behind me a night, an important part of my season of life. But before me eternity lies spread out, although I cannot see across the step which I have still to make to it. Perhaps I stand unaware on the brink of the grave, into which I shall either gradually sink, or be rapidly and violently hurled. Be tranquil, O my soul! Why art thou alarmed? What hast thou yonder to fear? Wilt thou, perhaps, when removed hence, be no more? Tremblest thou at the thought of eternal annihilation! Ah! wherever I look I observe abysses. I feel daily how the powers of my body diminish; but that which exists within the body gains daily new vigour. So wither the leaves of the trees, though the latter renovate themselves internally, and again put forth their buds. And shall no spring again return for me, when endued with new

beauty I may rejoice in my Creator? Shall I cease to be; I who feel in my heart an instinctive call to everlasting duration? Nature everywhere testifies her subjection to man: and shall man share with her the same transitory fate? My body may fall into inaction—the past night hath taught me so; but can even the deepest sleep impair or destroy my soul? O! then neither will the torpor of death annihilate it! No, even after the dissolution of my body I shall continue to be. O exhilarating faith in eternity, how beneficial art thou to my heart! Yes, thou art the most valuable thing I possess; thou wilt cheer my bursting heart, when the last hour shall come. Be praised, O God, that thou concealest this hour from me! Thou wouldst teach me always to expect it. Perhaps even now I carry about with me death's lurking poison; soon will it then break forth and consume me. Praised be thou that thou hast sealed up from my knowledge this hour of sadness; in order that I may, while here, be ever able to enjoy thy goodness with a happy mind. Let the uncertainty of my death instigate me to become certain of my reconcilement to thee, and of my portion in the blessed life to come!

But, O Lord, how volatile and inconsiderate am I even in regard to this truth! At present I reflect earnestly on my momentous alteration; but in a few minutes I shall have forgotten that I am a mortal man. Maintain in my soul these ideas, which are so healthful for me, and teach me under all accidents and vicissitudes to think of my end and my mortality. Extract from this remembrance that bitterness which it contains for the sinful, and discover to me the blessings which it offers to my hope and my spirit. Bring me to that happy frame of mind that I may be able to say at the close of this day: Thank God! I have advanced nearer to eternity and my happy consummation! Thank God! I have lived for heaven!

SEPTEMBER 21.

The Christian's Gain, Pleasure, Honour, and Efforts.

THOUSANDS are this morning occupied only with the thoughts of their temporal gain, and the promotion and assurance of their prosperity. Well will it prove for them if, in the attainment of their views, they fail not in that gain which is most profitable of all—even godliness: for this it is which alone affords us real advantages; and this, O God, I supplicate from thee in the present hour of morn. When in all my actions, I look up to thee; when, through faith in Christ I am certain of thy grace; when I keep thy law always before my sight and in my heart; O! how rich and happy am I then—what an inestimable gain does my soul enjoy! O! my Father, who art in heaven, assist me, through the power of thy Spirit, to accomplish the purpose which I now form: I will seek my chief gain in godliness. What gain can be greater than that which can never be lost! How vain is the winning of a few gay moments on earth! Teach me, O God, always more to discern the great gain of godliness and contentment with that which thou givest to me, and to strive after it with that zeal which such a prize deserves.

My soul desires not to obtain short fleeting days of worldly pleasure. All temporal joys are like the morning dew, which indeed moistens and refreshes the grass, but afterwards forsakes it beneath the burning rays of the hot sun, when it fades and becomes parched. They furnish me, it is true, with a few delicious hours or minutes; but the soul still feels, after their possession, a dreary void, and sees itself, at last, at the grave, deprived of all solace, and ready to perish with unallayed thirst. Godliness instructs me to seek a nobler gratification with thee, thou Source of all felicity, in the consciousness of thy favour, in the conviction of my redemption through Christ, and in the hope of eternity; for this comprehends within itself delights which never prove fugitive, and in the fruition of which the soul is never satiated. To gain these delights let me entreat thee, O Father, who art the bestower of them, faithfully and eagerly to exert the recently invigorated faculties of my spirit. Let not the ho-

nour of being here exalted above others be the spur of my endeavours, but the honour of becoming, as thy subject and thy heir, acceptable to thee—be this the ambition of my aspiring soul!

Jesus, my most perfect, my most loving guide! thou soughtest on earth not thy own honour, but the honour of thy Father, as the happiest gain. Fulfil the wishes of my heart, and render me similar to thy example and to thee. Let it be left to thee to apportion to me earthly benefits according to thy wisdom. Willingly will I be contented with all that thy hand throws to me: and should it please thee, my God, to prove me through the loss of temporal possessions, then shall my heart, through patience and hope, render itself worthy of thy redemption.

SEPTEMBER 22.

The Happiness that endureth for ever.

Ought I not in humble veneration, to admire thee and adore thee, O thou who deservest homage and praise alike from earth and heaven? Each vicissitude of nature is a proof of thy omnipotence, wisdom, and unbounded goodness. It is thy hand, O Lord, which has robbed the decorated plains of their ornaments; but not ere they had refreshed us with their fruits, satisfied us with their superfluity, and filled our granaries with their riches. Their pomp, with which no pomp of a princely throne can be compared, was not destined for themselves. Our utility, our support, our pleasure were the objects which thou, most kind preserver of our lives, hadst in prospect in them. This view has been attained. Now the beauty of the rural plain vanishes, but only so long until thou sayest: Be green, ye fields! Then will they, in new magnificence, again grow verdant. With what especial preference of love dost thou favour man among all thy creatures! How affectionately, how tenderly dost thou consult for his happiness! What is wanting to this happiness except that it should perpetually last? This eternal continuance of the utmost possible friendship, and of a tenderness

that baffles all description, the true Christian can promise to himself from thee alone. Of this he is persuaded, that however great may be the gifts with which thou overloadest him in his passing existence, thou hast in store for him far higher donations, which shall, without ceasing, gladden his soul in yon everlasting life. It is indeed confessed that those, likewise, whom thou peculiarly lovest, here often endure nothing but calamities; feel nothing but grief. All around them they behold a wilderness; they tread a sterile soil; nowhere do they perceive the vestige of a shooting blade of vegetation. But soon is the desert changed into a paradise, and their sorrow into ecstasy. The ground on which they stand, and which appears to them so dry and barren, even this same ground contains the seeds of an innumerable variety of plants, herbs, and flowers, shut up within itself, which, in due season, shall break forth to fill their pious souls with rapture.

Render these thoughts, thou loving Father of mankind, both to-day and during the whole period of my life, predominantly lively in my mind; so that when the bright scenes of the blooming valleys quit me, the sweet and recreating hope of thy speedy help and plenteous blessing, which, on yonder side of the dark grave, await my coming, may never leave me. The decay of all earthly beauties, which is so visible in every kingdom of nature, shall be to me a wholesome lesson not to attach my heart too closely to them, but, at the view of them, to turn both my heart and inclinations to that happy land of spirits into which I shall one day enter. And since this season of the year is so beneficent to man, let me learn from nature to become a benefactor to my brethren, and make visible the fruits of my righteous disposition. Soon will the winter of my life be here, the favourableness of which will entirely depend on the temper of my former life. O Lord, make me rich in good works, that I may always be agreeable to thee.

SEPTEMBER 23

The Christian compares himself to a Child.

I AM even as a child in knowledge, in inclination, and in weakness. What is my knowledge? What is my experience? Nothing, in fact, but the knowledge and experience of children. How can I, during the little time which I pass on earth, collect treasures of experience? What knowledge can I procure for myself among so many obstacles which I have not the means to vanquish? My best and most useful years wing their flight amid numberless distractions, cares, and disquietudes. I spend them like a babbling tale. And if I, at length, succeed so far as to penetrate into some particular branch of knowledge, then does death presently interrupt my occupation. Thus as long as I live I remain but a child in knowledge. But I am also a child in my inclinations: as children direct all their fancy to toys and play, so even in maturity of age my wishes and endeavours are devoted to the world's vanities. For honour, wealth, amusements, and other carnal things, at which I so anxiously aim, are nought but baubles and insignificant trifles, especially when they are weighed in opposition to the concerns of religion. And what a child am I in weakness! I stumble and fall almost every moment, and my whole life would be a perpetual falling if God himself guided me not as a child in the leadingstrings of grace, guarding my tottering feet, and preserving me from the dangers of false steps.

And this is my true happiness in my want of understanding, and my weakness, that I have a Father so abundant in love, who condescendingly accommodates himself to my childish state, and bears with me with pitying affection. He knows how feeble my powers are, and therefore he chooses for me the even path. He raises me up when I fall. He comforts me when I am sorry for my transgressions, and receives me again after I have turned away from him. He knows that I am a child, that earthly objects charm me more than the riches of heaven: he has patience with my infantine propensities, and assists my imbecility while he promises to me life, felicity, blessing, and tranquillity, and displays to me

the happy prospect of heaven. Yes; even as a father has compassion on the fruits of his loins, so has the Lord compassion on all that fear him.

Merciful Father! behold, I, thy simple, frail, and perverse child, seek this day my asylum in thy pity. Come with thy grace to the aid of my ignorance, sensuality, and inability. Instruct me in celestial wisdom, govern my inclinations, and support my feeble faculties. This day, likewise, will not pass without its steps of error. Let thy commiseration light upon me so often as I totter or slip: show thy indulgence to my incapacity, and grant me yet time that I may become wise for salvation. And as I have been hitherto like to children, in my wants and failings, so let me further resemble them in their innocence, in their obedience, and in their tender fondness. Let me live here as thy child, and hereafter arrive at the heritage of thy children, through Christ Jesus.

SEPTEMBER 24.

Nothing can compensate the Loss of the Soul.

The loss of that which the world can bestow is not irremediable, but the loss of the soul's tranquillity no other possession can supply. For what can man give that he may deliver his soul? Were I, for the sake of my soul, compelled to lose all that is valuable or enviable in the world, heaven and its eternal felicity would indemnify me in an infinite measure for all that I had sacrificed. I shall have no cause to repent if I barter the prosperity of this existence for the joy and glory which reign above. Those who, with a firm resolution of mind, have offered up their earthly gratifications and their earthly felicity of heavenly goods, have received here already so sweet a foretaste of the bliss which awaits them, that they were even glad in their troubles. O! delightful change of short grief for everlasting rapture. What life can be so fascinating, what pleasures so transporting, what opulence so immense, what honour so brilliant, that I should still hesitate whether to select earthly prosperity or the beatitude of heaven?

This consideration ought to rouse me out of the sleep of security, ought to subdue my indolence, to damp my extravagant love for the world, and inflame my desire after a better existence. How can I appear more in the character of a man and a Christian, than when I highly esteem that which moulds me into both? How can I more triumphantly prove myself to be a follower of Christ than when I abstain from all the vile lusts which war against the soul? My way runs along the edge of a gulf, out of which no rescue is possible. Shall I then heedlessly approach nearer to the brink of the precipice, and play with so frightful a danger? Shall the representations of God, shall the grace of his Son, and the abandonment of his life for my soul, not have sufficient dominion over me to induce me to make a profitable use of my time of indulgence still vouchsafed to me? Shall not the inflictions of my own conscience, shall neither heaven nor hell, deter me from that which may draw down irrevocable calamity upon my soul? O! that I might, at length, for once, descend into myself and reflect, with a pious spirit, how heavy the obligations are in which I am bound to my eternal salvation and to my immortal part! How should I then despise the frivolity, and, through the Divine support, overcome the temptations, and escape all the deceptions of the world!

Be this then, on the present day, my chief endeavour, and the object of all my cares, that I may preserve the health of my soul, and happily escape all the perils that menace it. Then should the future be pregnant with afflictions, I shall endure them with comfort and fortitude, and my actions, like my spirit, will be in heaven.

SEPTEMBER 25.

Lost Time irretrievable.

Nothing bows me down and humbles me so much, as the consciousness of having so often lost the most precious period of my life in efforts of vanity, of self-interest, and avarice, instead of employing it faithfully in the work of my refor-

mation, and of having so often neglected the opportunities of virtue, which were presented to me. For lost time is irretrievable, and every good action which I perform is a sowing of seed for eternity. Truly I am much happier than I deserve to be: God's grace has spared me and blessed me beyond all my deserts. This confession I am compelled to make with abashment and remorse! I am forced to own that I have frequently merited to be unhappy, and to lose all the advantages with which God has favoured me. I dare not boast that I have any just claim to the healthfulness, to the affluence, to the quiet, or to the safety with which God has hitherto so richly blessed my existence; for how often have I myself shaken my health through cares, through unnecessary vexation and sorrow, or through my passion, through anger and chagrin, through covetous restlessness, through improvidence, and through levity of mind! how often have I abandoned myself to lasciviousness! how often have I rendered myself criminal through pride and haughtiness in the time of success!

O! most beneficent God, do thou heal my numerous iniquities, and let me still further experience the effects of thy longsuffering. Let me meet thee with penitence and regret; and with an earnest humiliation on account of my past life, and a firm determination in regard to my future days, turn zealously to thee. I must no more have occasion to reproach myself with having a most unthankful and insensible heart. Rather must every new chastisement arouse me, and every new benefit lead me to repentance. I shall on the present day discover instances of righteousness and grace either in myself or others. Thou, O God of never-failing kindness, will to-day, as usual, shower down thy blessings upon me. Ah! let me but fulfil their views as sincerely, as I plainly discern them in all that occurs to me. Thou wilt allure me to contrition. Happiness and unhappiness, joy and sadness, health and sickness, all are means through which thou seekest to render me a better Christian. Give me grace, that I may avail myself of them to this blessed end, and employ the new respite, which thou this morning grantest to me, in striving to become ever more acceptable in thy sight.

SEPTEMBER 26.

Supplication for Grace.

By the space of one night more am I further advanced towards my last barrier, and brought so much nearer to my destination! Would that I had also become worthier of my exalted appointment than I was yesterday! O! with what satisfaction could I commence this day, were I able to say to myself with truth: I am this morning more pious, more devoted to God, more pleasing to the Lord than I was yesterday! This boast would be for me richer in blessings than any other happiness which I enjoy. But can I really glory as possessing any greater degree of righteousness than in my past life? If I judge myself ingenuously, and flatter not my self-love, I must perceive that I am to-day equally as perverse, as earthly-minded, as lightly disposed, and as inconstant, as in the former periods of my existence. Yet how? Ought I longer to continue so to live, that this degrading acknowledgment must be extorted from me? I draw ever closer to the hour in which so very much, nay, everything, will depend on the situation in which my soul is found. And if I then in that extreme hour can say nothing better of myself, than I am forced this morning to confess, how lamentable will my fate be!

Grant me yet, merciful God, the grace that I may pass my lifetime more commendably, and be able to welcome my final hour with a more consolatory consciousness. Make me daily more worthy of my Christian calling. Eternal life is the scope of my journey, and the road that leads thither is rough and narrow. Let me not be decoyed from this path by the example of the blindly prejudiced, who walk in ways selected by themselves, and pay not heed to thy law; who vaunt of their happiness and their wisdom, though their happiness is but a painted sepulchre, their wisdom lamentable error. But can any one be happy when he forsakes thee, thou fountain of life and felicity! He that offends against thy statutes wounds his own soul. And what does it avail a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul? No, I remain with thee, my Jesus. I will not associate with

those prosperous ones, as they are called, who have their portion on this earth. They sow unrighteousness, and shall reap sorrow. I will not walk with them but live guiltless before thee. Thy word and thy atonement are dearer to me than riches and honour: and thy favour is more valuable to me than the love of the whole world. Thee have I chosen for my friend and my guide, and this possession will not be taken away from me. O! when shall I see thy countenance, O Lord? So long as I have yet to live in this world, be thou, my God, always with me, and watch over me, that I may never go astray from thee and lose myself, but remain eternally thine.

SEPTEMBER 27.

Adoration of the Angels

MENTALLY to contemplate thee in thy wonders, O thou infinite Being, and to adore and venerate thee in the dust, O thou ineffable Deity, this constitutes the perpetual and happy occupation of the celestial spirits. Man was not as yet made, when thou hadst already formed these joyous inhabitants of thy Sion, that they might be the witnesses of thy marvels and of the creations of thy omnipotence. Then did they shine like fire-flames, then with glad acclamation exulted these thy children, and praised thee their Maker, ever to be worshipped. Each work which thy hand, so mighty in miracles, produced, struck them with deepest admiration, and elevated their felicity to higher degrees of rapture. But then were these spirits most profoundly and chiefly entranced in astonishment, when thou fashionedst the first man in the image of thyself. Now more and more loudly resounded through heaven their "Holy! holy! holy!" and, full of ecstasy, they greeted this sole mortal of the earthly world as their brother, and with him united their jubilee. But what felt heaven when thou didst proclaim to him the greatest wonder of thy love,—even thy Son, as the Redeemer of the earth! O! how longed the ethereal intelligences to look into this mystery! Yet remained it still concealed from

them, till thou in that momentous night vouchsafedst to appoint them the heralds of thy boundless mercy and condescension beyond parallel. O! what must have been the sensations of the angels, when they beheld thee, the refulgence of divine glory, obscured beneath the sorrowful veil of human nature, while they with seraph-tongues celebrated in vocal symphony the great event! Now was it their delight to dwell with men, as heretofore they trembled, when thou wast constrained in thy equity to arm them with the flaming sword against the fallen family of Adam.

O my Redeemer, who am I? As dust I cast myself at thy feet, and with amazement there revere the bounty of thy love. Angels may praise thee; more I cannot do: their thanks please thee, for their lips are purer; but I a sinner, wherewith have I to please thee? Yet I will admire, prize, and adore, the immensity of thy compassion. Never shall my soul forget what thou, my Saviour, hast so greatly done for it. It shall become the most assiduous employment of my spirit to meditate upon the extraordinary manifestations of thy tender pity, the vastness of thy merits, the grandeur of thy work.

I venerate and adore thee for all that thy incomprehensible omnipotence has bestowed upon me, in the wide domains of nature. The smallest blade of grass up to the towering cedar, the minutest worm up to the elephant, are proofs of thy universal power. Yet what would these wonders be to me, if I were doomed to exist no longer than they, if I had not to expect a new heaven and a new earth? I should envy the rocks which withstand all the devastations of time, and, in comparison with the duration of the world, mourn over my scanty life. But since I know that my life is of eternal continuance, that I have obtained, through thy redemption, the surest hope of a blessed immortality, O! how great, how fortunate must it now seem to me! Lord, teach me rightly to know the value of my destination, and so to live, that at the close of my earthly pilgrimage I may depart with the promise of eternal life into my heavenly country.

SEPTEMBER 28.

Comparison between the natural Harvest and the Fruits of the Spirit.

For me, O thou exhaustless Source of blessing and salvation!—for me hast thou replenished the present season with the gifts of thy love. For me Spring blossomed; for me Summer ripened the golden corn; for me, too, the trees now yield their fruitage. On whatever side I turn my gaze, the full streams of thy bounteousness pour along. The earlier months were destined by thee to prepare for me the fruits of thy bounty. Now are they matured; now by means of them thou fillest every living being with comfort; and I enjoy them to the glory of thy name, O thou Giver of all good. O! how manifold, my God, are thy gifts, with which the bosom of the earth teems! But where are the fruits with which I, as a Christian, ought, through thy hands, to be adorned? Where are the virtues which are well pleasing to thee, which promote thy honour, and conduce to the solace of my brethren?

I, too, am in the autumn of life. I have already lived years enough: but can I show to thy honour even a few ripe fruits? Thy grace has not allowed me to be quite barren, for which I praise thy goodness. Thou hast given me reason to know and to admire thy perfections, and a heart to love thee and long after thee. I began to exercise myself in the duties of thy holy law; and thenceforth determined to hold the advancement of thy honour and the welfare of my fellow-mortals as the chief aim of all my actions. Then did my life first become agreeable to thee and happy to myself. I blessed each day and every moment in which I had performed aught to thy glorification and to the advantage of my brethren. Then did it first appear to me to regain its early vernal bloom:—yet where are these matured fruits of righteousness which thou wilt justly demand of me at its close?

O! how many fruits have been suppressed in the bud! How much bitterness is still found in those which may have come nearer to perfection! How weak is my faith, when in

order to purify me thou appointest to me a few hours of trouble! How frightened is my soul, when under all the taunts of the world, under all its persecutions and all its slanders, I ought voluntarily to confess thy name and take up thy cross! How cold, how fickle is often the love with which I should advance my neighbour's welfare!

Yes, I must with shame acknowledge that I am a sterile tree that bears no fruit. Let thy strength, O Jesus, come to the assistance of my weakness! Let thy righteousness expiate my misdeeds! It is my ardent wish that I may be worthy of thy approbation and thy redemption. Anxiously would I resemble thy example, and honour, by my conduct, the name which I profess. But my desire will still continue unaccomplished if thou thyself vouchsafest not to me grace for this purpose. It is enough that my life has hitherto been void of good works: my future time must be so much the more abundant of them. O! might the present day be the commencement thereto.

O thou from whom my faith began, and through whom it must be perfected, to thee do I utter my cry for thy blessing and protection. Withdraw not from me thy support, but let me, through thee, become strong in godliness, and finally attain perfection in righteousness.

SEPTEMBER 29

Readiness for Death and Eternity.

In order to make a happy progress in the way which leads to heaven, watchfulness is indispensably needful to me; for on all sides my weak heart is enticed and hurried into temptation, and on all sides the destruction of sin menaces it. When I consider how uncertain the duration of my life is, and how fragile my mortal body, the necessity of keeping guard over myself presses upon me with a double conviction. I pass many nights in which infirmities or disquiet will allow me no sleep: ought not even this to rouse me to reflection, and direct all my efforts to the concerns of death and eternity? I find myself in constant risk of losing my life: am

I not then required to ask myself daily, whether I am prepared to quit this world, and whether I am qualified to render my account to the Lord? Dare I still venture to enter upon another day with unexpiated iniquities, and an unsanctified soul? Even the conscious feeling of strong health must not make me careless; for how many have I already seen sink suddenly into the grave, while they congratulated themselves on their firmness of constitution? It is precisely this feeling which brings me into the greatest danger of being lulled into slumber among my sins: here, therefore, my vigilance must be augmented, and the importance of caring for my soul must appear to me still more urgent, should I be further advanced in life, and should have already counted so many years, that nature forbids me to expect a much longer abode on earth; it then becomes of instant necessity for me to shake off the drowsiness of my soul, and accept salvation while it is yet offered to me. My Judge approaches, nor will he pardon my negligence. Death, his messenger, is already at hand. Shall I then unthinkingly wait till he surprises me in listlessness, and plunges me into everlasting perdition?

O Lord, through thy grace, I am awakened out of the sleep of the body! Awake now for evermore my soul out of the slumber of sin. Let me not, in regard to my most precious interests, act like a dreamer that is ignorant of his state, and proceeds heedlessly towards his destruction. Let me continually watch over my soul, my understanding, my inclinations, and my senses, and never for a moment be remiss in the task. Each instant of time is uncertain. There is no minute in which I can say, I shall not die. Never, therefore, can I take upon myself to say: "This moment I will sleep for a little, or be careless and secure." Everything around me, through its own instability, reminds me of death; and ought I not to value these warnings, these remembrances of my duty, and not contemn my spiritual health? How instant may my death be! I feel as yet, indeed, no disease, no mortal symptoms within me; but in the next hour my corporeal state may have undergone a rapid alteration. I may already be at issue with the gloomy victor. It is well,—I will listen to the mighty voice that now echoes through my heart. Jesus cries: "Awake, ye that sleep, and

arise from the dead." I will hasten and tear myself from my slumber, that wretchedness may not overtake me.

SEPTEMBER 30.

Review of the elapsed Month.

What have I neglected? and what have I performed? These are the interrogations to which, at the close of this month, I must submit my heart. On their answer will it depend, whether I am to look back with satisfaction or uneasiness to this considerable portion of my allotted time. My heart, be thou thyself now thy own judge! I will hearken to thy decision.

What have I this month neglected? Have I truly exercised that goodness for which each day offered me encouragement and opportunity? Have I remarked how God and my conscience instigated me to this virtue, or frightened me from that vice? Have I felt the high duties, to which as a man and a Christian, I am bound? Have I disposed of my time to advantage, and employed it prudently? Here I might have celebrated the glory of my Creator; and I was silent. There I might have served my brother through my aid and counsel; but I did not. The opportunity of obtaining a victory over my passions presented itself to me, yet I yielded myself to their destructive dominion; I abandoned myself rashly and headlong to their instinctive suggestions. I possessed so many means of enlightening my understanding, and rendering my will better; yet I have become neither wiser nor more pious. Alas! how much I have neglected!

But what have I, on the contrary, done during this period? I recollect that on the first day of this month, now hastening to its end, I formed the best resolutions to consecrate my life to God. But scarcely had a few hours elapsed, when my determination was already wavering, my zeal cooled. I used my time as if it had been my own property, and acted as if I ought to live for the world alone. Throughout the whole extent of the period to which I direct my retrospection, I hardly discover as many commendable deeds as it contains weeks.

Numberless hours and days are void of good works. How little I have done! How little for the benefit of my immortal soul, how little in order that I may hereafter appear with joyfulness at God's tribunal.

And this is an account framed for myself and my own conscience. How should I be able to deliver one up to thee, thou Omniscient? To thee all my slighted duties, all my committed follies, all my concealed defects are disclosed and evident, for thou searchest into me and knowest me, thou understandest my thoughts from afar. Ah! enter not with me into judgment! This is all that I can pray for. Grant me grace that I may properly occupy the close of the month, and repair that which I have left undone. In proportion as I have hitherto been supine in the practice of righteousness, let me to-day be zealous to perform thy most equitable pleasure. Amid so many squandered and visionary hours, may there yet be ONE which I must devote to my salvation! Amid so many misspent days, may this day be made to be that happy day of my existence which I employ according to thy views, and in unison with thy approbation and my own happiness in eternity!

OCTOBER 1.

The Necessity for, and Comfort of, Divine Aid.

MOST melancholy and comfortless, O my God, would be my condition, were I compelled to go forward to the uncertain future, without faith in thy providence, thy wisdom, and thy goodness. For if to-day, at my entrance into a new portion of time, I feel not terrified at considering, that all human felicity so soon and so speedily fails, and that the sharpest sorrow may tread upon the heels of joy; I owe this courage to the belief that thou producest the good day as well as the evil one, that thou woundest and healest again, and never failest to manifest thyself to thy children.

I cannot form a conception sufficiently terrible of my state, should I be deprived of thy support and blessing. A series of one-and-thirty days, the period which I see before me in

the present month, would then be for me a century of torment. For since I am so weak and helpless a creature, that I cannot dispense with thy upholding grace for a single day, or even a single hour, were it possible for me to live so many days successively, without being assured of thy stay and defence; with the most affected and penetrated heart do I praise thee, my compassionate God, that I am able to derive so much consolation and so much elevation of mind, from my conviction of thy providence. In the never-deceiving reliance, that thou for the sake of Jesus will be my God, I look forward without anxiety to every day of the month which now awaits me. I should doubtless find many occasions of disquiet, did I think of the sins which I shall commit, of the temptations that await me, of the bodily frailties to which I am subjected, and of the numerous inevitable accidents attendant on mortal life; I do not, however, yield myself to apprehension, but turn my eyes to thee, my God, and my protector. With thee there abide grace and much forgiveness; if oppressed with the burden of my offences, I seek thy mercy. Thou art the strong God, who rescuest me out of all my temptations, liberatest me from all my weaknesses, and canst turn all disasters to my advantage. I will not take care to myself as the heathens, but as a Christian pour all my solicitudes and necessities into thy bosom. Whether on this day or on any other, prosperous or adverse incidents occur to me, whether I am well or sick, happy or unhappy, let thy will be done, for what thou doest is good.

But perhaps I shall not see even the end of this day, and far less the close of the commenced month. Perhaps thou hast decreed, that even to-day I shall die, and when a new month returns to my brethren, be already in heaven, and from that blessed spot contemplate the world with far different sentiments. O! how can I tremble at this thought of my decease, since death will bear me to thee, and to the dwellings of eternal peace! O be this alone then my wish, that I may obtain from thee the grace to expire placidly and happily. Lord, triune God, bless me and guard me. Guarded and blessed by thee, no calamity will reach me, no danger overthrow me, no weakness subdue me, no sin plunge me into despair, no death render me wretched.

OCTOBER 2.

Confidence in Divine Succour.

THAT I can behold this day with a soul tranquil and free from trouble, is an effect of the trust which I place in the almighty goodness of my God, of the confidence with which I commend to him my ways, of my hope in him, and of the submission with which I resign myself to his will. And in how lively a manner does each incident of my life encourage me in this reliance, and in this hope! how rich is the experience of my days in memorials of the divine wisdom and kindness, in wonders of the omnipotence, and in evidences of the tender care of my Father above. Through affiance in this all-powerful efficacy of the Deity, I am enabled to surmount every difficulty and every danger. For the Almighty is infinitely benignant. He loves me with more ardour than that which warms the cherishing bosom of maternal fondness. His goodness prompts him continually to interest himself for me, and to manifest his boundless power in my behalf. And what a ravishing idea is it, when I reflect that this goodness is liable to no alteration, but endures from eternity to eternity!

Well it is for me, that the Lord of heaven and of earth is my ally, and that my hope rests on the Almighty, who has made heaven, earth, sea, and all that is therein. How should I ever yield up such a hope, or cast away my reliance, since I know that they have so great a reward? No, not even the most woful events of my life shall at any time enfeeble my hope; where human assistance is nugatory, there must my security in God increase. The more my hope augments, the more contented shall I become. All my friends may leave me desolate: the Lord is my perfectly sufficient friend. Darkness may spread its thickest shades of palpable obscurity around me; the Lord is my illuminating brightness. Innumerable perils may threaten me; the Omnipotent is my protector and deliverer. Let the frailties of my body be ever so great; the Lord is my strength. Let my death be as bitter as imagination can suggest; God is my life's vigour and my eternal health. Cases may occur in the course of my existence, which I can neither foresee nor determine; under all circumstances, however, the Lord

remains my dependence, my expectation, the rock of my stability. In this disposition I enter upon the present day, and I humbly supplicate thee, merciful God, that thou wilt retain me in it to my end. Conquer through thy Spirit all unbelief and fickleness in my heart, and raise me to such a state, that I may anticipate from thy goodness everything that is good. Let me live to thy honour; so wilt thou glorify thy beneficence in me hereafter.

OCTOBER 3.

The Sacrifices enjoined by Christianity compared with its Rewards.

Why am I frightened at the hardships and the sacrifices which, as a disciple of Jesus Christ, I ought to impose upon myself? Why does my heart fail at the view of the rugged, thorny path in which duty conducts my steps? Ought I not to be cheerful and comforted, since I know that heaven will recompense me for everything? And is not God mighty in my weakness when I supplicate him for support? And is then the way of vice no rough and thorny track? O! how blind am I not to perceive the dangers and the ruin of the broad road! Compare, on one side, the offerings which the world demands with the reward which it promises, and which is still so uncertain. Compare, on the other side, the attention which the salvation of the soul exacts, with the inestimable benefits which it allows thee to hope for, in perfect security. Thou wilt then be aware that for the countless afflictions which it causes to its children, the world never indemnifies them. But thou wilt find, on the contrary, that the sufferings and the struggle, which thy solicitude for immortal blessedness imposes upon thee, can stand in no competition with that remuneration which succeeds them. And how canst thou complain of the irksomeness of thy pilgrimage, when thou rememberest how much toil, how great a conflict, what severe visitations it cost thy Jesus, to mark out to thee the route by which thou art to follow him? To reconcile heaven with earth, to vanquish

hell, and to obtain heaven itself for thy patrimony, how long was he obliged to be divested of his celestial glory, in what poverty and contempt was he pleased to live, and under what indescribable agonies had he to taste the bitterness of death! And thou wouldst be dissatisfied though the way is already made plain for thee, though the greatest obstacles are already cleared off, and though, at the termination of thy course, so noble a prize awaits thee?

No, my Jesus, I will no longer lament over the toils of the Christian path. I will rather cheerfully resolve even to-day to pursue that path which is prescribed to me. I will allow myself to be terrified by no laboriousness from fighting the good fight of faith and obtaining eternal life. How insignificant are in reality all the pains and grievances which I am called to endure in this effort. Even the bitterest cup that will be presented to me is far from being that cup which thou wast constrained to drink to its last dregs. Even the strictest self-denial can in nowise be compared with that to which thou didst submit; even the most insulting wrongs are trifles to the unjust ignominy which thou wast reduced to bear. Even the most excruciating death is gentle when placed in opposition to that feeling of expiring anguish under which thou drewest thy last breath. And how long will it last?—Then is the way at an end; then are the steeps climbed; then is the battle finished; then are the dangers overcome,—and I find myself, at length, in my celestial home, where, in the enjoyment of unutterable felicity, I shall easily forget that I have here endured labour and fatigue.

OCTOBER 4.

The Value of a good Name after Death.

The consciousness of being beloved by others belongs incontestably to the purest joys of earthly existence; and it is a heart-cheering thought to know that after death we shall be wept and mourned over by sincere friends, and followed by the regret of upright men. This will be the best eulogium of my life, if the pious, as they stand around my bier,

exclaim: Would that he had lived longer! On the contrary, what pain must the idea occasion me that, at my decease, not myself, but my money and my possessions, will be extolled! No, I will leave this fame to fools. I will so live that I may not go out of the world disregarded and unlamented. I will give to all who know me the justest cause to keep me in blessed memory, and to hold me equally worthy of due applause and of unfeigned grief. If I live equitably, mercifully, temperately, and righteously, my very enemies will be forced to admire my virtues, and, notwithstanding their malice, be obliged to form a fair judgment of my character. And how soothing will it be to my friends and relatives, if I bequeath to them the consolation that my soul is in the mansions of rest, that I have lived in the fear of the Lord, and into his hand commended my spirit. How will they then wipe the tears from their cheeks, and desire nothing further than soon to be reunited to me for ever!

To-day, therefore, will I begin to live in such a manner, that though I should even shortly die, my death may be of good repute and happy. In order to obtain this felicity, I need not first wish for hoary years. Though I should depart from the world in the bloom of my life, I have lived for a sufficient period if I have lived in holiness and integrity. Gray-headed men die, and yet die not wise; no sigh of sorrow breathes upon their grave; and the only merited epitaph that could be placed over them would tell no other tale than that their lives had been long enough.

No, no, not that I live long, but that I have lived wisely and to God's honour; this must be my glory, and in the hour of death my comfort. I must shape my life after such a model, that no votary of virtue and religion may retire from my tomb without hallowing my memory, or without being edified by my example. Yet it is possible that I may die unknown and unmourned by men. But if I then only obtain the praise of my Judge, and the approbation of my Redeemer, and if I am only admitted into the community of the blessed, so shall I be well pleased though no monument record my name, and no human being deplore my loss. I will henceforth especially strive after the renown which is with God. This will indeed refresh my soul when it feels the terrors of death.

OCTOBER 5.

Spiritual Perils.

As the mariner, when he has entrusted himself to the insecure ocean, must be every hour prepared to encounter perilous storms, that may deliver him over to death, so also must man on his life's voyage, since everywhere dangers both of body and of soul surround him. Every moment does he run the risk of losing his innocence, his quiet, and even his immortal spirit itself. When I regard the world in this light, I discover the strongest inducements to watchfulness and to the strict care of my soul. For what is the world but a state of distraction, of vanity, and of disorder? And what a tyrannical dominion do anxieties, wealth, and sensual lusts, exercise over my heart; how many hindrances likewise lie in my way, as I endeavour to work out my salvation, and how much do they often prevent me from consulting the real good of my soul!

As soon as my heart abandons itself to earthly solicitudes, I experience nothing but uneasiness and discontentment. And how numerous are the occasions of which my perverse heart avails itself for the indulgence of these anxieties! Sometimes I fret myself about the past, and am displeased that God has led me differently from what, according to my own foolish plans, ought to have been the course of my life. Sometimes it is the future about which I torment myself. I am already now so weak; how weak shall I be hereafter! I am already now in so much need; where shall I find my support after a lapse of years? At another time I am discontented with the present. However great the blessings God bestows upon me, I am still dissatisfied. If he lays the most trifling and lightest burden upon me, it appears intolerable. And if to all this be added that inclination for terrestrial possessions and enjoyments, which seems my master passion, my distraction becomes yet greater. Then the most momentous concerns are stripped of their value in my estimation, and heaven and hell appear to me of no importance. And when my condition has arrived at this point, I am only a few steps removed from my ruin.

And can I be indifferent under these thoughts? No, I will employ the hours of solitude to meditate upon myself and upon the world. I will, ere I yet mingle again with the temptations of life, arm my heart against them, and embrace the firm resolve to seek my everlasting felicity with fear and trembling. I have cause to be distressed on account of my vain heart. And soon should I be overpowered, if I made bold to expose myself to the world, confiding in my own individual strength. With me there is no force to resist the might of vanity, the lusts of the flesh, and the enticements of sin. I flee to thee, my God: do thou make me strong to fight against vice and its allurements. Be thou the guardian of my soul, that perdition may not seize it by surprise. Display to me the snares which are laid for my virtue, and deliver my feet out of the nets that are spread for my innocence. Only through thee can I gain the victory over all temptations, and save my eternal soul, which without thee must be irretrievably lost. From this destiny preserve me, O merciful God! Let me rather, I beseech thee, carry off the prize of my faith, namely, my soul's salvation, through Jesus Christ my Saviour.

OCTOBER 6.

Contempt of God's Grace.

I RECEIVE every morning, reiterated through my conscience, a solemn appeal no longer to abuse the grace of my God, and no longer to shut my heart against his call. O! if I did but maturely reflect how weighty, how inestimable the blessing is which God offers to my soul through his promises, how would it be possible for me to resist them! It is in some measure magnanimous to refuse the favour of a potentate, and the gift of the greatest riches; but it can never be styled glorious to slight the invaluable salvation which is destined to my immortal spirit, and to underrate those things which shall render it blessed to all eternity; were not this rather the most lamentable blindness? Is it not only contemning but also dishonouring God's blessings, and himself who presents them to us. If I had that reverence for God in my heart, which

I owe him, if I held in consideration either his tender love or my own welfare I should show myself more zealous in the service of the Lord than heretofore. When I am absorbed in temporal affairs, or when I squander my time in debauchery and riot, have I then any heed for myself and for my soul? And if I am so careful and so industrious in the acquirement of worldly advantages, but negligent and indifferent in respect to those things which affect my eternal happiness, what else do I manifest by this conduct, than that I deem earthly property more desirable than even my own soul and its everlasting welfare?

I have yet time to remove this blindness, and to turn from this inconsistency. Many are the years I have dissipated with an extravagance that admits of no apology; from the present day, however, I must begin duly to value my soul, that is beyond everything besides, and no longer trifle with a possession purchased with no less a treasure than the blood of the Son of God. What then are the cherished objects for which I relinquish God and his grace, and my own spiritual peace? Have I really ever found so much pleasure in sin or in the vanities of the world, that I should be willing to become for them eternally miserable? How shall I hereafter judge of my sinful errors, when I once draw near to my death! What a sad result will then the contempt of the divine grace have for me! If temporal ruin and destruction are already frightful, what must eternal perdition be! If the anguish of the mind and the pains of the body already occasion so many tears, how infinitely poignant must be the torture both of soul and body in hell! If a consuming fire, which yet cannot continue longer than till the combustible material is burnt up, is so terrible, how dreadful must be the agony of the incurably wounded conscience!

O God, let me consider this, while thou still to-day givest me time to think upon it. Let me deem it an incalculable mercy that I shall enjoy a respite to become penitent, to entreat from thee thy grace, to dispose wisely of my time, and to retract from unrighteousness. To this beneficial aim must the new day be devoted. Then will God forgive me my former disrespect of his divine grace, and vouchsafe to me that felicity which is prepared in heaven for his children.

OCTOBER 7.

The present World only a State of Trial.

FREQUENTLY do I complain of the toilsomeness and the troubles of life, of the conflict which I have to sustain, of the joys which I have to sacrifice, and of the calamities which I have to suffer or to dread. But do I also consider what it is that I lament? Is all the inconvenience which I endure of such importance as to merit these bitter wailings and this sore vexation? Do I likewise balance the gratifications which God bestows upon me with the sorrows which he sometimes allows me to feel? Do I think of my brethren who have yet more distresses to burden them than I have, and who are obliged to struggle against poverty, calumny, pains, and diseases? I, perhaps, am free from all these severe trials; my afflicted fellow-mortals would perhaps willingly exchange their sufferings with mine. And even granting that I am a prey to everything that can embitter the heart of man, did not the martyrs undergo much more than I do? They were in perpetual danger of death, and constantly exposed to the most frightful torments and the hottest persecutions. Penury, contempt, slander, and sickness, are but trifles when compared to their tortures, at the bare name of which human nature absolutely shudders.

What are my sufferings—what are the sufferings of all martyrs, in competition with those which my Saviour was constrained to support? Truly nothing more than as a drop of water to the sea. The sins which make me smart, wounded him far more deeply. Dare I mention the cup of misery which is presented to me, in the same sentence with that which the holy and the undefiled Jesus was compelled to drink?

And have I not, in my small portion of wretchedness, the consolation that it cannot continue long? But the Saviour must always endure the opposition of sinners, and still incessantly behold his work injured by the hands of the iniquitous. And how much encouragement do I find in the sufferings of Jesus to bear my own with greater fortitude! I see, from his example, that God does not deal so severely with me, when he gives me a load to carry, as he did with his own Son.

Why should I walk on roses, when his Only-begotten trod in so thorny a path? Even though I had to surmount insult and disgrace, violence, injustice, envy, and even death itself, what right should I have to murmur? Has not the Son of God submitted to all these for me? Do I live in a mean, despised station? O! then I must remember Jesus, who, although he was in the divine similitude of the Godhead, assumed the appearance of a servant; who, though he was rich, became on my account poor. Am I wrongfully debased and calumniated? Then I must contemplate Christ, whose humiliation was inconceivably more grievous. Do I find myself labouring under cares, anxieties, sorrow, and toil? O! then I must call to mind the death-pangs, the bloody sweat, and the horrors of the cross of my Redeemer. Does the period of my deliverance seem long in arriving? O! then must I contemplate his glorious consummation, and through him expect as happy an issue to my life.

If I put these sentiments into practice, with what composure and tranquillity shall I meet all the cares and troubles which the present day may bring with it!

OCTOBER 8.

Unjustifiableness of our Complaints and Murmurings.

For me, who have made so small an advance in amendment, melancholy is the idea, O God, which now rises in my soul, when I think that I have perhaps this morning awoke for the last time in the world, that for the last time I pray to thee, and for the last time enter into the society of my brethren! And yet this consideration contains much probability. I am a falling leaf, a withering flower, a passing shadow, a fragile, perishable man. Numberless events may occur to bring death upon me; the germ of dissolution, already in my body, may ripen into fatal maturity; or some violent accident, occasioning as many disorders in my soul as in my corporeal frame, may suddenly sink me in the grave. A distemper may seize me, the impetuosity of which shall, in a few hours, render me an inanimate corse. The fall of a stone, an unlucky step, a wrong movement, an un-

expected fright, a fit of immoderate anger, and a thousand other things which I cannot foresee, may deliver me up to death. The time and hour of my death are to me an impenetrable secret. No morning brings me the assurance that I shall remain in health till the evening, and no evening guarantees to me that my final malady shall not assail me in the night. Neither do I know, whether among favourers or foes, among my connexions or among strangers, in repose or in the tumult of the world, in abundance or in want, in the social circle, or in helpless loneliness, I shall yield up the ghost! How many circumstances combine to call forth my first thought, that perhaps I pray for the last time in this world!

And if this supposition should be actually realized, if this should be my last morning prayer, could I, with a tranquil heart, behold the hour which was for ever to close the lips that now move in devotional address to my God? Alas! O Lord, were I to die in the state of mind in which I still am, my perdition would be irremediable! Therefore do I implore thee to grant me grace, through worshipping and watchfulness, to prepare myself for that ultimate destiny which must, beyond all doubt, overtake me. Perhaps I pray for the last time:—so much the more ardent, so much the more sincere, must my devotion henceforth be. Perhaps this is the last day of my life: the more zealously must I therefore endeavour to employ it well, and wisely to profit by every hour which is granted to me, for the salutary purpose which has this instant been the theme of my entreaty to the Almighty! Perhaps I mix to-day for the last time in the company of my brethren:—so much the more then must my love for them increase, and the more faithful must I be in the performance of the duties which my vocation demands from me! Perhaps this is the last day in which I shall experience the adversities of life:—the more patient will I therefore be in the endurance of all hardships, and the more constant and courageous under all circumstances! I supplicate thee for thy grace, loving, benevolent Father, that I may succeed in wisely using to my everlasting well-being the time which thou mayst yet allot to me. Then may death surprise me at any season, and in any situation; I shall not fear it, but calmly commit my soul to thee.

OCTOBER 9.

Reflections on the Alternation of Day and Night.

The vicissitude of day and night is undoubtedly a most beneficent dispensation of the Creator, but still it belongs to the imperfections of this world. For our incapability of existing without the refreshment of nocturnal rest is a proof of our weakness and frailty; and the helpless condition in which darkness places us, and the involuntary horror which it excites in our hearts, is also a sad memorial of our natural weakness, and reminds us strongly of our complete dependence upon Him before whom darkness is not darkness, but the night shineth as the day. Is it not, therefore, a cheering thought for our minds, that there will arrive a period when night shall be no more; when the day of our immortal life shall have burst forth over the horizon of eternity? The inhabitants of heaven are never tired and languid; they require no sleep. As long as I remain in this inferior world, I perceive that night interrupts all occupation; but the employment of heaven is never disturbed. In that happy region neither indolence nor inactivity, nor vacant or idle space of time, ever occurs.—In this present world the hours of the night being spent without occupation, they appear to us long and dreary when our eyes keep watch, and repose flies from us. But in heaven the whole progression of futurity is light and life,—lively occupation and industry united to perpetual sanctity and joy.—So long as I remain here on the earth, the darkness of nature often exposes me to the danger of losing my way, of running into error, or falling into misfortune; but in the celestial kingdom there is no danger of this description to be dreaded. All heaven is illuminated by the presence of God: the steps of that world are all pleasure, and eternal noontide shines over them without cessation.—When night invades the skies, all the delights of vision vanish: but in heaven the glory of the new world is always brilliant to the view. The beauteous scenes of Paradise will never be taken from us; we shall there constantly behold a rich variety of such things as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no imagination conceived. As long as I live on

the earth, night often reigns in my spirit. My heart seldom feels that mental ardour which God demands. How cold is oftentimes my zeal for the glorification of the most high and most benign Being! How slothful and indifferent am I frequently in regard to my soul's salvation! How deficient is my soul itself in that proper fire and passionate sincerity which ought to animate its devotion! But when my soul has entered into its inheritance in heaven, the most sacred earnestness will glow through all my holy occupations, and I shall know no languor, no obstacles, and no indifference.—Finally, the regular return of night at each day's close, forms an unceasing emblem of death. Night and the sleep of night are in themselves a short state of suspended life. But as in heaven there is no night, so neither has death nor ought that resembles death admittance there. Life and busy action pervade its interminable space. All faculties are there invulnerable to decay, and all activity flourishes unwearied; for the mortal, perishable body no more oppresses the spirit.

To all these enjoyments shall I attain, when the morning of the resurrection dawns. But here, so long as I continue in this world, where day and night, light and darkness, labour and rest, succeed in constant revolution, I will live in perpetual expectation of that momentous change, and will strive to render myself, through faith and godliness, worthy of the happiness which awaits me eternally before the throne of Jesus.

OCTOBER 10.

Human Wisdom contrasted with Divine.

It is my sacred duty, that I should act conformably to the wise and benevolent will of my Creator, and in all that I do, seek to co-operate with his views. As a rational creature, man ought to imitate the unsearchable wisdom of God, who impressed on the soul of the first mortal this power of choosing and rejecting. But, alas! the wisdom so imparted to the human race was lost. On a careful observance of my soul I perceive this truth with sorrow. How often do I igno-

rantly choose those things from which I ought to fly! How often, on the contrary, do I shun objects which deserve my attachment! The power of the senses is so strong, that it bears me down, and often represses in my spirit all its better emotions and sentiments. Wealth, honour, and pleasure, these are the molten images before which I fall, and from which I expect tranquillity and happiness. And if I sometimes make a good selection, it happens chiefly because thousands have so decided already! and on this account also I only employ their means, without desiring to discover any new plan which might perhaps be more effectual towards the attainment of my aim.

How completely different does the wisdom of my God in this respect appear to me! His purposes and views are always the best. But how inscrutable, how incomprehensible are frequently his designs!—At one time we see that the most profound wisdom is concealed where those who affect sagacity think that they discern injustice. At another, that in compliance with his intelligence a dry staff shoots out buds; and that, for the refreshment of a multitudinous people, a dry rock pours forth its gushing waters.

Under all circumstances his unfathomable knowledge is visible. The fallen foliage of autumn must rot in order that it may, in the ensuing spring, re-assume in new shoots a yet more beautiful green. O! what a consolation is it for thee, my soul, when, illuminated by the Divine radiance, thou canst discover a small vestige of the marvellous ways of divine wisdom, and when rapt in admiration thou humbly adorest the Unsearchable! Here thou seest a Joseph, the prop of his father's age, sold by his envious brothers, that he might at once become their preserver, and the preserver of a whole nation. There thou perceivest one and the same instrument employed by God as the instrument of curse and blessing. The waves of the sea are forced to recoil and to tower themselves up like walls on each side to protect Israel, and to punish Pharaoh for his obduracy. Again thou beholdest Christ's church universally afflicted. Hatred, cruelty, and barbarity conspire with the gates of hell to shake the foundations of the faith. But these very attacks give new vigour and divine strength to the Christian faith.

O Lord, maintain in me these comfortable thoughts, and

teach me to act according to thy good pleasure. Hereafter I shall acquire more distinct ideas of thy providence, and be constrained with rapture to confess that thou, O Lord, hast ordained everything with perfect wisdom.

OCTOBER 11.

The Mysteriousness of God's Ordinances and Dispensations.

HAPPY is it for me, that I believe with confidence, that the ways of God are pure love and truth; and that my faith points out to me the ordinances of eternal wisdom, even where my weak heart is troubled and afraid. Wherefore should I bewail the evils of this life, since I know that they conduce to my peace, that they cleanse my heart, elevate my spirit, and confirm my faith? Wherefore should I foolishly inquire why God has not made the world and myself more perfect? Only an infinite understanding can comprehend why everything is ordered thus and not otherwise: and God is not bound to render to me an explanation of his views and his operations. As a benignant Father, who daily overwhelms me with abundant and new blessings, he claims my gratitude; as the Governor of the world, he demands my submission: and wilt not thou, my soul, submit thyself to so gracious a Father—to so powerful a Sovereign, who every minute convinces thee, that he loves thee and provides for thy welfare? Wilt thou not confide in the God who displays his omnipotence, his wisdom, and his affection towards thee so manifestly? If here thy condition is not perfect, but subject to many vicissitudes, expect from his love a more perfect state in futurity. Every grief that presses upon thee is an incitement to this hope. All nature, all the attributes of God—and, yet more than all, the love of Jesus, assure thee of this. He who brings the grain of seed-corn to maturity, who provides for the insect in all its different changes, and gives wings to the worm, shall he not allow man to arrive at perfection, and will he not place him in a state superior to the present world? When hereafter the course of

nature and of the world shows the obscurities which thy intellect cannot develope, beware of indulging a doubt as to God's wisdom and goodness, or of confiding too much in thy own intellect. Rely on the hand which directs the march of the stars, which determines the circuit of the sun, and knits together the myriad-linked chain of created things. He will by his unbounded power, maintain all his works till the solar flame is quenched for ever, and nature has attained her latest aim. Resign thyself to the will of that Being whose decrees remain always good, however incomprehensible they may appear to our finite intelligence.

If, O my soul, thou followest these precepts, every portion of thy life, every day, every hour in thy pilgrimage, will afford thee ample occasion to praise the wise and gracious governance of thy God. And to this occupation let then the passing day also instigate thee. Be attentive to the whole tenor of God's guidance in every instance, and form no judgment till the Divinity has accomplished his counsel in thee. Thou knowest not beforehand what views he has for thee, but thou wilt hereafter learn them. Only be thou patient, and never let thy hope fail. The termination of all the Divine dispensations, and, above all, Eternity, will fully disclose to thee, how faithfully, how affectionately, how like a Father, the Lord leads his own people.

OCTOBER 12.

Time to be employed in Preparation for Eternity.

Each day that I live exhibits to me the picture of my whole existence. Its ruddy dawn represents the morning of my years; its twilight glimmer is like to the decay of my vital strength; and how soon, perhaps, may I sink into the evening of my life! But thy view herein, my Creator, is daily to remind me of my earthly lot. Every climate has its own peculiar day, that each individual may learn the progress and the employment of life. Even that distant inhabitant of our globe, who enjoys the sun for entire months, has yet to fear, in return, the proportionably long night, and to redouble his industry that it may not surprise him unprovided. Ought

not I, likewise, daily to redouble my assiduity to prepare myself not only for the night of death, but also for the morning of the resurrection? The day glides rapidly away:—do I require any other warning to remind me of the end of my appointed period on earth? Why then do I reckon upon years, as if years were my fixed property? He is already beyond calculation rich in time, who can say to himself: "I have gained this day, this hour!"

How precious must every day be to me! Each ought to be devoted either to the planning or the execution of a good action. Is it void of laudable deeds or pious purposes? then it belongs not really to my life. Those hours only have I lived, at which I shall rejoice at the end of my life, and which I shall then bless. According to these considerations it would be impossible that I should merely consecrate a few fleeting moments to communion with God, or keep him before my eyes only in solitude. Every undertaking, which harmonizes not with my everlasting destination, must appear to me indifferent and futile. On this account also the Lord has so closely connected the duties of our worldly profession with our future fate. Must I deem every day a respite of preparation for eternity?—how careful ought I then to be in the observance of my calling, and in the execution of my righteous resolutions, to distinguish every step of my pilgrimage by some good effort. Who would not wish to possess at the close of his days, the recollection of many pious deeds, and to bequeath to his posterity this recollection, and the hope in a just Retributor, as the fairest of all inheritances?

Never, therefore, will I reckon on the morrow, but perform instantly that which it behoves me to do, as if I were certain that I had only the present day to live. Whom do more vexations harass than him who is ever occupied with the expectation of future years? I must so live every day as if the brief spectacle of this world's pageantry were, for me, ultimately closed. I will not covet numerous years; this only shall be my desire, that I may usefully employ the time allotted to me, and store for myself a treasury in heaven. Lord of my days, render me thus wise and happy, that through the constant meditation of my destiny I may neither in the evening of this day nor at the completion of my life have cause to regret that I have lived.

OCTOBER 13.

Admiration of the Works of the Creator.

Repress not, O my soul, that innate desire with which the Lord has endowed thee to admire the wonders of his works, and to praise his wisdom. Through this feeling, with which he has inspired my heart, would he excite thee to know and venerate his greatness, and to rejoice in his love. O! then employ the emotions thus implanted within thee to the honour of thy Creator. Taste and feel how friendly the Lord is. Everywhere mayst thou indulge this noble instinct. Thou hast no need to dig through rocks, or to make dangerous excursions to foreign lands, to discover the marvels of the wisdom of God. Each single moment, each spot of earth, every season of the year, render them visible, and invite thee to rapture and amazement, and to the adoration of thy supreme Maker.

A few weeks ago, I marked with silent pleasure, the young swarm of bees collecting, at the first break of dawn, their honey on the meadows. With equal industry did the ant climb up the stalk of corn, and travel back with the ripe particle of grain to her subterraneous dwelling. Who instructed them to be thus considerate for the future? Who now takes care for them so that they may be able to brave the rigorous tempests, and may, till the succeeding harvest arrive, tranquilly consume their stores? O thou wondrous Preserver of thy creatures, here stands my comprehension at a pause, when I observe the skilful solicitude with which thou sustainest and nourishest all animal existence, from the fly to the behemoth. Who wafts the swallow over land and sea to warmer regions? who fixes for her the day of her departure? who is the director of her flight? who shows her where to rest her foot? who guides her back to us again?

My understanding, O! thou omniscient Being, is far too bounded to embrace the entire field in which thy almighty power displays and magnifies itself. Yet that part of it which thou unfoldest to me shall suffice to make me thankfully acknowledge the pre-eminence over the brute creation with which thou hast invested me: through thee they live with-

out knowing the hand that feeds them; but I feel, I know, that it is thou whose goodness provides for me every day, and in every season supports and governs me, defends and preserves me. Yet, since I know this, ought I not to live tranquilly and abandon my cares to thee? Teach me too the wisdom to think justly of the future. Thou didst not create me that I might pile together hoards of wealth for this short life: but I am rather destined to secure riches for eternity. Let me, like the bee, in the season of my spring-time, be thoughtful of my wintry days, of which I shall say: "They please me not."

If it be my object to collect for myself treasures and consolation against the period of necessity or sadness, I shall everywhere find a supply for my soul. All nature, God, the world, heaven and earth, reason and revelation, beast and man, will teach me what I ought to do to become well-pleasing to the Lord of the universe. A school will everywhere be opened to me for the study of wisdom, if I have but a pious, docile heart.

OCTOBER 14.

The Lot appointed for every one, the best for him.

However small may be the external fortune which, through God's ordinance, has fallen to my share, it is sufficient for my desires; and the situation in which I am placed is, in a word, beyond question, the best and the most beneficial for me. When I afflict myself so much about the partial distribution of earthly possessions, I forget that it is the work of the All-wise, who can neither err nor be unjust. To be convinced of this brings with it tranquillity, secures me from envy, and moderates my extravagant complaints. With what contentment can I this day return back to the world, if I believe, with full certainty, that the degree of prosperity which God has assigned to me, the rank in which he has placed me, and the privileges which are dispensed to me, constitute the best lot that could have been determined for my portion!

But though I know this truth, yet often do such wishes

as these intrude themselves into my heart when I see others fortunate:—Ah! that my fate had been of this description, that similar felicity had been mine! Ah! that I were only so respected, so rich, so prosperous, so free from anxiety, as thousands among my brethren are! And the feeling grows still stronger, when I join in the crowd of society, and become a spectator of the unequal partition of the gifts of fortune. Yet do I understand what I desire? Probably I should change my thoughts, if I compared that which I possess with that which is wanting to me. Is my condition on one side unfavourable; it is on the other so much the more worthy of thanks. It is true, I have not the power of enjoying the world and its amusements with unrestrained licence. But even this circumstance excludes a great variety of disquieting feelings. It is even for this very reason, namely, because I do not live in superfluity, that I am freed from great temptations, and have not so many opportunities of offending God, of wounding my conscience, and of denying the faith. Neither have I to contend with so many enemies who envy my prosperity. Many of my fellow-mortals indeed can, in various ways, gratify their senses, and their fancy; but I am not, on this account, more unhappy than they, since I feel a proportionably increased longing after the joys of heaven, and sweeter peace in my soul.—It is true, that the outward fortune which I covet in those whom I term lucky, renders this life delightful and agreeable. But if I cannot live so gaily, I can die so much the more cheerfully, and without distressing myself, like the favoured of Mammon, who experience so much anguish when they have to leave their possessions behind them. The station at which I aspire is, according to my own opinion and that of the world, more advantageous and pleasant than my present one. But the station in which I find myself according to the destiny of God, is in God's judgment equal or superior to the other, which I prefer.

O! would that these considerations might make the strongest impression on my heart, and that, by satisfaction and contentment, my quiet might be promoted.—Let me, O God, in that state to which thou hast called me through thy benevolent providence, labour to secure my salvation without negligence, without sloth and impatience. Grant that the

prosperity of this world may not render me proud, nor its adversity dispirited. Let me ever look, with enlightened eyes, towards the other world, and, through the contemplation of it, be excited to renounce this sublunary kingdom, and to live temperately, righteously, and devoutly, so long as I shall yet be an inhabitant of the earth.

OCTOBER 15.

Godliness and Worldliness at Variance with each other.

Would I advance nearer to the goal which my faith sets before me, would I finally arrive at it, I must then no longer conform myself to the world. But what will the world say of me if I reject its judgment, set at nought its lusts, renounce its applause, and withdraw from its distractions? Shall I not be regarded as a hypocrite, and a false devotee? I would willingly bridle my sensuality, and contemn earthly gratifications: but yet how sweet is it to obey our inclinations, and how bitter to do violence to nature! I will flee from the company in which I have hitherto met with so many enticements to sin: but how insufferable will my solicitude be to me; how much will it cost me to tear myself out of the arms of my choicest friends! I will leave the old way: but yet wherefore should I become singular? My predecessors walked in the same paths, and many thousands still pursue them, who assure me that happiness and ease are to be found in them.

These are the conflicting thoughts which arise in my soul on the forming of each good resolution. This is the contest which takes place within me whenever I purpose to amend my life. And what is then my fate? I am vanquished by these slight assailants; with the best intentions, I continue undetermined; with the wish to be virtuous, I indulge an antipathy against virtue. This is the short and sad history of the greater part of my resolutions. And even this day, likewise, will in me confirm the saying of Jesus: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." But I will no longer remain in this melancholy and wretched situation, in which I

can procure no rest for my soul. Through thy aid, O God, I will be more undaunted in the accomplishment of my praiseworthy design. To the charms of the flesh I will oppose the allurements of the spirit; to the voice of nature the voice of grace; and to the weakness of my own powers the strength of the Divine grace.

It is my earnest intention from the present day to abandon my instability. The world may judge of me as it will; it may load me at its pleasure with the most opprobrious epithets. Its sentence can decide nothing; its hatred can injure me as little as its love can be useful to me. I will crucify the flesh. Nature may rise up in rebellion against me; it may seem hard to my feeble heart; I will not be moved; yet the first victory will efface all the bitterness of the conflict, and represent to me the satisfying our carnal lusts as the most galling slavery. I will shun the intercourse of those with whom I have been hitherto entangled to the prejudice of my soul. Irksome as retirement may at first appear to me, it will become pleasant to me, when I have tasted the delight of entering into an union with God. I will forsake the path of sin. However great may be the number of those who may tread in it, I will not become wretched in their fellowship. Let the way of virtue seem ever so rough, the further I proceed the more pleasant it will be to me. I may not, perhaps, have in it a single companion: yet if God is with me, if Jesus is my guide, if the angels are my spectators, I can easily forget the desertion of man. I will devote my heart to godliness: and should there in so doing be much to deny and to suffer, eternity will refund all my losses, and remunerate all my toils.

OCTOBER 16.

Offerings of Thanksgiving to God.

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord, and boast of his holy name! Speak to God and say: How wonderful are thy works! Thy enemies will fail before thy great might. Let every land worship thee, and celebrate thy fame.

Come here, and look at the doings of God, who is so illustrious in his deeds among the children of men! He rules eternally by his power; his eyes behold all people. Praise our Lord, ye nations, and let his glory be widely resounded. He it is who preserves our souls in life, and allows not our feet to slip. Lord, thou art my God, I praise thee, and exalt thy renown, for thou performest marvels. Thy conduct towards man, even from the times of old, has been faithful and true; for thou art the strength of the feeble, a protection in trouble to the poor, a refuge from the blast, and a shade in the heat. Thy truth encompasses thee around: heaven and earth are thine: thou hast founded the solid globe and all that is on it. Lord of Sabaoth, who is like to thee, a mighty God? Midnight and midday, evening and morning hast thou made. I return thanks to thee, Lord, my God, with my whole heart, and honour thy name for ever; for thy goodness is exceedingly great over me, and thou hast delivered my soul.

Thou, Lord, art my confidence and my hope from my youth upwards. On thee have I relied from my mother's womb. Thou also hast protected me in the past night from all perils. Eternal God, I resign myself to thee anew. Be my soul, my body, my thoughts, my inclinations, and my passions consecrated to thee, O Creator. Bless me through thy providence, lead me according to thy counsel, and sanctify me through thy Spirit. Be my guide in all my ways, my protector in all perils, and do thou spare me in my sins. Give me neither poverty nor wealth, that in my need I may not forget thee, nor amid superfluity forget myself. Vouchsafe to me a good conscience, and let me guard it as my dearest treasure. Render me adapted to my calling, and make me rational in all my actions, contented with my situation, and composed amid the sufferings of life. Preserve me from idleness, and from all opportunities to sin, and render me ever more firm and steadfast in godliness. Let me as far as possible keep peace with all my brethren, and contribute my utmost that they may live tranquilly and happily. Shield thy church and thy worshippers from all assaults of wickedness. Sustain the authorities whom thou hast placed over us. Give wisdom to fathers, that they may bring up their children to thy honour; and willingness to the children, that they may

be obedient to their parents. Let all useful trades and handicrafts thrive, and be mindful of each of my fellow-men according to his necessities.

What hymns of thanksgiving and praise will then be offered up to thee at the close of this day from the favoured world! And though all the multitude of the living should keep silence, I will come forward as a witness of thy omnipotence and goodness, and praise thy lofty name, which is the hope of all people, and the safest bulwark of all nations.

OCTOBER 17.

The Approach of Winter.

THE unpleasantness of approaching winter is now experienced but too sensibly. My joyfulness subsides; my soul seems to me to mourn with nature; my feelings are no more so lively, and my spirit is no more so serene, as when the vernal sun recalled the dead vegetation to a new existence. Yet amid these melancholy sensations which the spectacle of the desolating season occasions to me, one consolation still cheers me. When I behold the whole landscape withered, the woods leafless, the hills stripped of their beauty, and all the gardens deflowered, the future loveliness of nature exhibits itself to my mind, and again diffuses a calm through my heart. In imagination I see the tender grass sprouting once more under the snow, the naked trees again covered with foliage and blossom, and the plains decked out with blessings. O my soul! be herein instructed in the value of thy prerogative. From the irrational creatures all this is concealed, and they scarcely know how to enjoy even the present. How much has thy God bestowed upon thee in this gifted superiority! Without this faculty the contemplation of the past as well as of the present, would be tormenting to thee. O! then use this propensity to dwell upon the future, not to thy pain, but to thy well-being: for to this end has God implanted it in thee.

I can look back into the past, and all is love and goodness

that I have received from my first infancy till the present day, from the fatherly hand of my God. But how much is my triumph in these divine blessings diminished, when I carefully reflect on the course of my own life! Hours, days, and years, which I permitted to pass profitless away, profitless for the salvation of my immortal soul, I now wish to recover back in vain.

And how few are the hours which I can remember with unalloyed satisfaction. The first man alone, so long as he continued guiltless, enjoyed pure pleasure from the recollection of former times, when he could revert in idea to every moment which he had spent in innocence. What transport dost thou conceive, my soul, in such a life, which flows as placidly and smoothly along as a purling brook through the meads of spring?

Yet, what a soothing, heart-elevating thought!—I shall not perpetually lament the loss of this pure innocence. The prospect into futurity, whether near or distant, and this longing after higher felicity, were not bestowed upon me by my Maker for my torture. The future on yon side of the grave discovers to me a purer and more perfect life than I can here obtain. O, my Creator, how shall I thank thee that thou hast not entirely hidden from me the happiness of futurity! What would my life be, since so many of my past days disquiet me, and since the present contains so little agreeableness for me, if the future did not promise to me more ease and pleasantness? Jesus, thee have I to thank, that I am not compelled to tremble at the thought of my second life. Let then, through thy Spirit, this hope become always more lively in my soul, and sweeten for me the present imperfect and toilsome existence. Let me not direct my regards with sickening anxiety to the temporal future, but rather cherish in my heart the persuasion, that a God who on my account has laid up so much blessedness for the eternal future, in heaven, will also grant to me, for the earthly future, as much as is needful for my real good.

OCTOBER 18.

The Present and the future State.

THERE is an infinitely greater difference between my future and my present state, than between the smallest ray of the morning light, when it first breaks, and the immense body of the sun itself, which imparts illumination and warmth to the whole world. Of this truth I am indeed firmly convinced; but yet I am much more occupied with the care of my earthly prosperity than with the far more serious concern of my eternal salvation, and feel more grief when I lose a worldly advantage, than when I am in danger of throwing away celestial possessions. I know that this life will soon arrive at its end, and yet with indefatigable solicitude do I form arrangements as if it were to endure for ever. I know that the future life will never finish, and yet I make little or no preparation for it; and that which renders me so secure in this momentous affair, is the mad supposition that the life to come is yet far distant. But is it then actually so far from me that I should dare to be careless and secure? Do I know the boundary which God has appointed to me on this earth? and though I did know it, may I venture to treat the most important of all circumstances in so light and inconsistent a manner as to postpone it to everything terrestrial? Is my everlasting welfare not worthy of the endeavours of all the days of my existence?

O! blinded man that I am, what have I done in employing solely for the acquirement of vain earthly prosperity the precious time in which I ought to have worked out my salvation! Can I recall what I have neglected? make substitution for what I have lost? And though I should reach the highest summit of age allotted to man, would it be in my power to retrieve my carelessness, or to expiate my contemned duties? No; in vain do I attempt to excuse my past indolence and heedlessness! they are, and they must continue, culpable; and I can only reflect with bitter remorse on the days which I have foolishly squandered: I have no hope, save that which the mercy of God affords to me. These are the reflections which I am anxious should accompany me in the

world. O! that both time and eternity could make so deep an impression on my heart, that during the whole day, I might think of nothing so earnestly as the shortness of my mortal period, and the retributions which await me in eternity! O Lord, do thou, however, confirm my heart, through thy grace, in this holy consideration. Let not the strongest allurements of this life divert me from striving, with all my powers, after the attainment of the life immortal and eternal. Let me, moreover, enjoy a faint prospect at least of the glory that will be hereafter, that I may so much the more zealously endeavour to walk in the way of virtue, and to vanquish all the difficulties that may occur in my path.

OCTOBER 19.

The Wonders of the human Frame.

THE extraordinary structure of my body is of itself sufficient to convince me of the existence of an infinitely wise and all-benignant Being: and though there were nothing else in the world that would make manifest God's greatness, my corporeal frame alone would amply do so. How many wonders do I behold, for the research of which even the most protracted life is too curtailed! What depth of wisdom do I discover in the arrangement and junction of so many different members! What fitness in the relation of all the parts to each other, and what beauty arising from the varied harmony of the whole complicated machinery, are perceptible to observation! I need only confine myself to the external form of my body: all the organs of the senses are so admirably ordered and adapted, that I cannot contemplate them without adoring the Lord, and praising his knowledge and skill. Who instructs the eye how to cover itself? Who prepares the ear and gives it the power to catch the gentlest sound? Who regulates the measured motion of my heart? And who made this exquisitely devised body to be the veil and dwelling of an immortal spirit? Who produced this spirit, which I only know from its operation and effects, and by which I exalt myself to the meditation and conception of my

Creator?—O! Jehovah, how great are thy works! how fathomless are thy thoughts! I will extol thee, my God, because I am made in so marvellous a fashion. Wondrous are thy deeds, and that my soul well knoweth!

How were it possible, with such evident monuments of the eternal beneficence, to remain unaffected and insensible! But, alas! my life demonstrates to me how easy it is that God may be forgotten, even in the midst of his miracles; so often have I regarded my body, and used my limbs, without thinking of their supreme Author. I will, however, this morning look into myself, as if it happened for the first time, and carefully explore whatever may excite me to the glorification of my God. As often as I exercise the sense of seeing, of hearing, or of feeling, I will recollect the Lord, from whom I have received these organs and faculties of perception. He has given me eyes to gaze upon the loveliness of his creation; and hearing, smell, and touch, that his greatness and his goodness may flow upon me through every medium. May then my entire life magnify his goodness; may no day pass by in which I do not thankfully acknowledge and joyfully celebrate his loving kindness! Yea, render glory, O my soul, to the Lord, and let not the memory of his mercies depart from thy thoughts.

OCTOBER 20.

God's universal Providence.

Events daily occur in the world that render it undeniably certain, that a wise and benign Providence watches over the whole earth, and especially over mankind. I must obdurately close my eyes, and malevolently suppress every feeling, if I would not observe these evidences of God's gracious governance, or would remain insensible to them. How important, and how worthy of gratitude, is the preference which God has displayed towards man. I can, under all circumstances, assure myself in the most certain manner, that my life is valuable in the sight of God. With what care does he guard me; with what fidelity does he avert dangers from my

existence; with what kindness does he provide for my recreation and refreshment; with what bounty does he sustain my perishable body! Had it not been his hand that supported me, I should long since have admired the morning sun for the last time, or beheld each repeated revolution of it in misery and sorrow. I must have deemed every addition to my days as a punishment, if God, while he continued my life, had not also increased his grace towards me. And what a consolatory idea is it, when I reflect that this grace is spread everywhere over the earth, and that no spot is to be found which does not contain the visible marks of the Divine bounty! Wherever I go, the goodness of God incessantly accompanies me; it watches by me during sleep, and it is close to me even in solitude. All nature instructs me as to the solicitous superintendence of the Deity, and strengthens me in the trust which I place in his almighty beneficence. Each bird that hovers around for food reminds me of the providence of the omnipotent Maker of heaven and earth, and reproaches me by its freedom from all care.

O! then will I become more attentive to his wonderful providence, and rejoice in the high felicity of being subject to a God who is so plenteous in goodness and wisdom. How invaluable ought I to esteem the privilege of daring to confide in him, and to expect from him everything beneficial! How important ought I to account it, that through Jesus Christ I can regard him as my reconciled Father, and full of comfort and reliance commend to him all my interests! And how much consolation may I derive from the consideration of his attributes! God is omnipotent; therefore he can never be deficient in power to assist me, and to deliver me out of dangers. God is omniscient; therefore he must know the best means of promoting my happiness. He is omnipresent; therefore in all places, and on all occasions, I shall find in him a mighty helper and bearer of my prayer: neither will he let me go unrewarded when I sincerely perform his law. He is eternal; therefore I possess in him a friend who can never be torn from me, who can never be untrue, and whose love and constancy can never falter.

Be praised, O God, for these consolations! Bring me, I beseech thee, by thy grace, into such a state, that I may be also able to rejoice in these thy divine qualities. Let me

place my delight in meditating upon them and admiring them, and let me thereby be excited to the exercise of virtue. Grant that I may constantly live mindful of thee, and through the daily proofs of thy holy providence receive an irresistible inspiration to devote myself to thy service, and remain in eternity peculiarly thy own.

OCTOBER 21.

The unfeeling Sinner.

THERE is hardly any temper so unfeeling and inflexible that it cannot be moved and softened by benefits. Even the irrational brutes allow themselves to be won through kindness. The stiff-necked sinner alone it is, who can be affected by no goodness, softened by no friendliness, enticed by no promises, gained by no gifts, and brought by no motives to the love of God. Man acts more unjustifiably towards his heavenly Benefactor, than towards his earthly patrons. He receives from his Creator the bread that nourishes him, the earth which bears and feeds him, the light that illuminates, the sun that warms him, and all the benevolent gifts that are to be found either within or without himself; and yet he turns aside from the All-benignant, whose bounty streams afresh every morning.

Dost thou not, O my soul, recognise thyself in this portrait? Or art thou more sensible to the benefactions of thy God, more attentive to his voice, and more thankful for his mercy? Have the donations of the Lord—each day's and each new morning's tokens of grace, obtained so much dominion over thee, that thou hast been thereby moved to obedience, and to love and adoration towards God? Ah! how many past days testify against thee! How many blessings must, on account of thy ingratitude, shame thee and disquiet thee by the recollection of them! O! cease to act in a manner so unworthy of humanity! Cease to wrong him who has anticipated thy very wishes with so much kindness, and who had shown such vast goodness to thee, ere thou thyself could perform anything good. Cease to repay benevolence with evil, love with hatred, and indulgence with

obstinacy. God has effected for thee all that was needful for thy welfare. He has bestowed upon thee everything for thy happiness; nay, he has even destined thee to yet greater felicity, and he requires from thee nothing but acknowledgment and love. Canst thou deny him this without loading thyself with heavy and unpardonable guilt? Wherefore wilt thou not evince to him as much thankfulness as thou demandest from others for thy own slight services? Wherefore wilt thou not love him, when in him is united all that can be deserving of love? Behold, this morning invites thee anew to gratitude and affection. Let not this invitation be made to thee in vain, but awaken thy whole heart to love this adorable Being, and render thanks to thy everlasting Benefactor.

Lord and Father! forgive me, that I have hitherto so little observed the duties which I owe to thee. I have surpassed many in the want of love and in unthankfulness; but now it is my earnest purpose to excel my pious brethren in ardour and gratitude. I will be more heedful of thy blessings: I will be devoted to thee in reverence and esteem. Let not thyself be impelled by my former indifference to withdraw from me the further enjoyment of thy bounty, but vouchsafe thy gracious regard to the resolutions under which I now bind myself for my future life. It shall be my most inviolable duty to praise thee, and enjoy thy blessings with a contented heart.

OCTOBER 22.

The Day of Judgment.

The hour approaches, when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of God and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. What frightful intimation is this for the sinner whose conscience accuses him! —Should thy great day, O God, find me in the midst of my accustomed sins while they are unrepented and unatoned, ah! whither could I flee—where take refuge, when the tempestuous elements glow with fervent heat, and both earth and heaven tremble?

Wretch that I am! Alas! whither, whither should I betake myself, if the day of retribution were to overtake me ere I had yet corrected my heart? With whom should I find help, when all things cried out vengeance against me? What could cheer me, when terror and agony were diffused everywhere around me? Above me I should behold the angry Judge: beneath me hell would open its jaws, and gape to swallow me up. On the right my sins would condemn me, and on the left the spectacle of the rejected would affright me. Within my remorse, and without the groans and the lamentations of the damned, would conspire together to my torture. But above all would the thought of an eternity fill me with horror and dismay. What then would remain for my consolation or my deliverance? How should I be able to endure this anguish? What way could I select to escape from it? To go back would be impossible, to go forward would be too terrible. What should I do under such awful circumstances? If I sought death, it would recoil from me; if I desired the rolling mountains to crush me under their shaken foundations, they will deny me this direful resource. Despairing, wretched, and lost, should I stand and await the irrevocable sentence: DEPART FROM ME, YE ACCURSED, INTO THE EVERLASTING FIRE.

To be tranquil and unconcerned under such dreadful considerations would evince the most unpardonable folly! But have I indeed often felt in my soul a salutary shuddering on the contemplation of this final judgment? Careless and secure I have hitherto wandered on, and destruction would assuredly have overwhelmed me, had the last day surprised me in my negligence. Times beyond number have I lulled my heart asleep with the idea that a long career of life still lay before me. But who then has given me the assurance of this? Might not this day become the extremity of my earthly course, this very hour prove my last? Ah! Lord, appear not yet in thy dread majesty. Erase me not yet from the world, nor yet extirpate me. Grant me yet time for repentance, a reprieve for my amendment. But arouse me that I may be ready, when thy Son comes, to receive him with joy. And do thou thyself teach me how to conduct myself according to thy pleasure.

OCTOBER 23.

Reflections on an added Day of Life.

For what purpose has God again gifted me with new life? This is a question which I ought every morning to put to my soul, and to which I ought to reply with sincerity. And this would be the surest means to render me watchful, careful, and faithful in the employment of my life, and to damp the opposite inclinations, which so often spring up in my mind. I will now, therefore, make this inquiry candidly; my own conscience, and divine revelation, will furnish the best-founded answer:—Wherefore has God granted to thee, my soul, a new day of life? Has the morning sun arisen upon thee, that, under the favour of its light, thou mayst perform the deeds of darkness? Are thy eyes again opened to thee, that thou mayst fix them on objects of sensuality, on the carnal treasures of the earth, and the lusts of the world? Does thy heart yet beat, that thou mayst ruin its peace and happiness in sinful endeavours? Or is there a more exalted view, for the sake of which God has reanimated thee? O! how couldst thou for a moment doubt that thou hast not here thy permanent state?

Now, then, reflect maturely on thy destination and the purpose of thy life. The sole scope of thy being is the glorification of God, and the working out of thy salvation. To this centre all thy wishes, efforts, and actions must directly tend. All that thou undertakest, though thou couldst even acquire empires by the enterprise, is mere folly and useless labour, if it stand in contradiction to this aim. But all that harmonizes with thy true appointment, whether it be fortune or mischance, wealth or poverty, loss or gain, will be salutary for thee. Hence determine instantly on the present day to prosecute, without procrastination, the grand business, on account of which thou art actually in the world; for this alone is important and great: the rest is trifling and vanity.

I confess to thee, O Lord, that in relation to the main intention of my earthly existence, I have been hitherto most incautious and careless. I have sacrificed my essential, eternal happiness to the deceptious glitter of the world, and my

calling, which belongs to heaven, I have sought on the earth. I perceive my error; and I thank thee that thou hast discovered it to me. I have still, through thy grace, time to amend myself: I will not, therefore, sport with the day of safety, but remain unalterably faithful to the good resolution which I have this morning formed. Yet what can I effect if thou be not mighty in me, a weakling? Therefore do I entreat thee, perfect in me the work commenced till the day when Christ shall appear. That epoch will bring my destiny fully into light, and exalt me to the undisturbed possession of those advantages to which I was created and redeemed, and for which I was stationed in this world. Then shall I completely learn how worthy these treasures are of my love, my hope, and my desire.

OCTOBER 24.

Of past Follies.

This morning brings to my recollection, while the cares and troubles of life rush anew into my heart, all my former follies and frailties However far I carry back the review and examination of my life, I find everywhere proofs of the perversity and the weakness of my heart. In what a sad state of mental blindness have I hitherto lived, submitting myself to the tyranny of my sensual instincts, and taking upon me the burdensome yoke of sin, under which I was so often compelled to groan on account of its oppression! Yet no, how happy should I have been if my situation had extorted from me any sighs!—But, alas! I tripped along, amid heedless, frantic pleasures, and felt not the load that weighed upon me, nor the misery which it contained, and saw not the destruction into which I was hastening. Little as I found my happiness in the gratification of my unrestrained sensuality, yet I constantly continued to seek in the same course the felicity that has constantly fled from my grasp.

O! that this morning may prove the morning of gladness, on which I shall begin to abandon the path where I have so long pursued happiness and quiet to no purpose! Would that I might perceive that if I desire to live happily on earth

I must love and observe the holy law, my God! Might I be convinced through thy Spirit, that the more I struggle in sin after felicity, the more my disquiet must be augmented! And what pleasure can a spirit possibly experience to which is wanting internal peace, the fruit of innocence alone?

Then labour, with redoubled ardour, my soul, to acquire the persuasion, that only in the ways of virtue and duty, the true happiness of life, and the most lasting tranquillity of the heart are to be obtained. Waver not, now, in this joy-producing conviction, when thou seest sinners outwardly prosperous in their course of iniquity. Soon is their apparent happiness gone, and all their glare for ever vanished: soon from all this felicity there remains nothing but remorse and despair. O! how totally different is the lot of the pious! He flourishes like a tree planted by the side of fresh waters; his leaves wither not; his joys pass not away; his fruit is never blighted. His fame is as lasting as his happiness, and his name is written in the catalogue of the blessed.

All-sacred Being, when I contemplate this happiness, I feel myself strengthened for the zealous performance of virtue. I know and believe that in the paths of piety and wisdom alone walks true felicity. Lord, give me grace that this certainty may also influence my will most ardently to court this felicity, and prefer it to all the happiness of the earth, which generally exists only in imagination. Keep this day, likewise, thy eyes over me, that I may not wander into the mazes of perdition. Preserve me from the snares that may be set for my youth or my experience. Invigorate me in battling against sin and the enchantments of life. Endure me with pitying compassion when I fall into errors. Accomplish thy work in me, and hereafter vouchsafe to me the crown of righteousness. Happy, inexpressibly happy shall I be, if already here in this world thou art everything to me, as in heaven thou wilt be all in all.

OCTOBER 25.

God addressed as the all-wise and beneficent Creator.

Who exalted in the firmament that sun which now skirts the distant horizon with gold? Who clothes it in majesty? Who

feeds the stars with light?—Thou, thou, Almighty Being, thou dost all this. Thy hand has made the heavens, has fixed in them the fiery ball of the sun, and pointed out to the stars their orbits. From thee and through thee are all things that exist. This is my first feeling at the view of the beams of the morn: this is the first thank-offering that I bring to thee, thou Supreme Ruler of the world. My first look is directed to thee, thou highest and most adorable Deity. Whither could I indeed bend my gaze, and not perceive the most visible signs of thy presence, or find excitement to praise thy illustrious name? I myself am a wonder of thy might, and a speaking monument of thy goodness. The earth, with all that it contains, is a masterpiece of thy hands; and the heavens are the offspring of thy omnipotence! Those celestial bodies which float in harmonious order in the boundlessness of space, and in proportion with which the earth is but a particle of sand, proclaim to me the greatness of thy power, and the incalculable extent of thy dominion. Who has said to the sun: "Rule thou the day?" and to the moon: "Be the luminary of the night?" Who has prescribed their course to the planets? Thou, even thou, who marshallest the starry host according to their number, and callest them all by name.

And among these astonishing productions of thy power I also am ranked. Small though I am, when I compare myself to those gigantic masses of worlds, still dare I to boast that I am a creature sprung from thy hand. Verily I cannot but be amazed when I reflect that so sublime and so mighty a God humbles himself so low as to think of man, who is merely dust, and who so often, by his transgressions, renders himself undeserving of the favour of his Creator. I am indeed compelled to look up to thee with awful dread, thou source of all perfections. But when I consider again how much I owe to thy Son, my Mediator, O! how ample appears to me then the dignity which thou hast conferred upon me.

In the name of this everlasting Son I worship thee, Parent of creation. I know not how better to sanctify this early hour than by bending my whole soul to the contemplation of thy supremacy and grace. But grant that the consciousness of thy Almighty goodness may remain as forcible with me,

during the whole day, as it now is. If at any time pride should lay hold of me, let me think of thy greatness, that it may inspire me with humility. Should I become distrustful and of little faith, remind me of thy omnipotence, which is united with such infinite goodness. Would I hearken to sin, represent to me thy holy and fearful majesty, before the glance of which not even the purest can subsist. Am I inclined to be merciless or uncharitable towards my brethren, teach me to remember those indescribable benefits which thou daily heapest upon me, notwithstanding all my unworthiness. All that I see on earth ought to urge me to thee; ought to exalt the love which I entertain for thee, and heighten my veneration. In all ought thy glorious name to be extolled by me. In this manner must I prepare myself for the happiness that is placed before me in the blessed life of immortality, in which during all eternity, I shall incessantly behold, admire, and adore thy greatness.

OCTOBER 26.

Instability of the World, of the Heart, and of temporal Peace.

I LIVE in the world, as if on a boisterous sea, where storms and tempests every moment produce threatening dangers, where frightful darkness often suddenly succeeds to serene sunshine, and where man is so often abandoned, a helpless prey to destruction, or sees himself at once rapidly shot away from the haven of his toilsome voyage. When I fancy that I have found a place of rest, I am compelled to commence my course again. All things decline, all perish, all fall to pieces before my eyes. A great part of the world, that I beheld when I first entered into it, is no more. New characters tread the stage, and even these prepare themselves already for their exit. On earth hardly anything happens according to my wish. What I love, withdraws itself from me; what I desire, I do not obtain; and what I dread, overtakes me. Never am I completely happy. If prosperity smiles upon me, health is wanting: am I in health, prospe-

rity is not with me: am I learned, I have numerous distractions: am I ignorant, I suffer through contempt: am I exalted, I become a butt to envy: am I mean in station, the multitude deride me. How variable also is my heart! At this moment I cherish the design of serving God, and in the following moment it is already suppressed by terrestrial objects.—There is within me a neverceasing interchange of desire and repugnance, fear and hope, joy and vexation, hatred and affection. I am scarcely for a moment similar to myself, but the sporting-ball of mad passions, of unexpected events, and of sorrowful cares.

This is the brief and true portraiture of life. So has it hitherto happened, and so will it be in the future. As long as I continue to live on earth, vanity and inconstancy will be my lot. I shall every day perceive new proofs of the uneasiness and the vicissitude of human existence. The health which I now enjoy will, perhaps, ere evening, be turned into mortal illness. The tranquillity which I now experience may, perhaps, in the next hour yield to grievous disquiet. The hope with which I now flatter myself is, perhaps, already near to its disappointment. My heart, now filled with affection towards thee, may soon become insensible amid the tumult of the world; and my whole happiness may have been but as a morning dream.

Who knows what painful and afflicting change I shall this day encounter? This much is, however, certain, that I cannot rejoin the world with any other sentiment than that with which my whole life itself inspires me,—that all is vanity! In the evening, perhaps sooner, I shall repeat this truth, after Solomon, from my own conviction. O! let me not then so foolishly love that which is vain, and so inconsiderately choose that which is unstable. I shall spare myself many a bitter pang, if I use with moderation the world and its vain possessions. I shall be able to secure to myself contentment under the most unpleasant effects of the inconstancy of mortal affairs, if I keep heaven always present to my mind, —that heaven where neither the vanity nor the sad vicissitudes of this life find access.

OCTOBER 27.

Christ, the Shepherd.

O Lord, thou art the tender and faithful shepherd of my soul. Would that I had never left the way in which thou leadest me, and that I had always listened to thy call, and not to that of the world and my own corrupted heart! Then should I not reap such bitter repentance from sowing the seed of vanity, and from my foolish love of the world. With what shame and regret do I now awake out of my trance; how impressively do I feel that I am not worthy of the high dignity of belonging to Christ! I turn back to thee, my Saviour, and will now confide myself with sincere submission to thy guidance. Conduct me to my everlasting weal; graciously take charge of thy strayed wanderer; spurn me not from thee; but forgive me my errors; and heal my blindness. I vow to thee undeviating fidelity and ardent affection.

I know, O adorable Saviour, that thou art ready and willing to fulfil my desire, if I cherish an earnest longing to turn to thy flock. Lo, I entreat thee most suppliantly to draw me out of the world to thyself. Permit me not to remain longer separated from thee, or to be longer deprived of the greatest of all comforts that is left to me in this misery. —If I were abandoned to myself, alas! I should become eternally wretched. Lead me, thou Prince of blessedness, by the road that conducts to heaven. Defend me through thy grace, that I may not be carried away by the tempting lusts of the earth; but retain amid the charms of this life an unsullied conscience. Should I this day run into false paths, forsake me not, I beseech thee, but seek the lost sheep, and bear me again to the fold. If thou be my Saviour, and if thy light illuminate me, I shall have no cause to fear any calamity, but shall be able to pass with joy even through the valley of death. And at length, my Shepherd, thou wilt conduct me to that place where I shall be for ever happy in thy fellowship. This is the one thing, and the most momentous, for which I humbly call upon thee.

OCTOBER 28.

Instant Dedication of Oneself to God's Service.

As often as in the silent hours of meditation I reflect upon myself, and prove my own heart, I perceive that my virtue is still weak and imperfect, my faith still wavering, my heart still impure and unsteady, and my follies still great and deeply rooted. Dare I then, since I have yet so short a time to live, delay my amendment till a distant period? Did I even know with certainty, that death would not hurry me off in the very years which I sacrifice to the world and to sin, should I be justified in throwing away the precious season allotted to me for my preparation for heaven? Though death should not unexpectedly assail me, should I become even hoary and full of days; should I then feel more strength or more inclination for my reform? No, my long intercourse with the world would more probably harden my heart, blunt my sensibility, and render me wholly indifferent to the salvation of my soul. And why should I not consecrate myself to God till my old age? he is the Lord of all times and of every age. Is my life by any means too long, that I should not entirely and solely devote it to the God who has given it to me, and who promises to me an immortal one hereafter in exchange for it?

No, thou Author of my being, not for a moment longer will I remain at a distance from thee. Even from this very morning will I begin to listen to thy voice, which I have so frequently slighted; choosing the way to which I have hitherto been so averse, and tearing myself loose from the world, which has hitherto held me in such close bondage. But, O Lord, how often already have I formed this resolution! Often I have sworn to thee love and fidelity, and even as often I have left my promise unfulfilled. I am not for an instant master over my own heart. A thousand times has the very next minute after I had resigned myself to thee in sincerity, turned me aside from thee; and, like a feeble, faithless mortal, I have relapsed into the same state of spiritual darkness, which I had so lately detested. Of what, therefore, can I now assure thee, my God, with such a giddy uncertain mind?

O Lord, hasten with thy grace to my assistance. I now stand profoundly impressed with strong emotion in thy presence; let me not become again insensible. I now embrace a laudable determination; let me not hereafter grow once more irresolute. I vow to thee anew eternal truth; let me not become again the perjured violator of my sacred covenant. Let me not, when I have re-entered into the world, withdraw the offering which I now present to thee in solitude. The obedience which I declare to thee, the love which I profess to thee, and the fear in which I find myself to walk before thee, must not pass over as swiftly as my morning devotion. Make me more steadfast in thy service, less attached to the world, and more resolute under temptations. Deliver me from my fickleness, and take away from the world the sway which it usurps over my heart. Under the support of thy grace, I hope to-day to live more acceptably before thee than hitherto, and hereby obtain the exalted felicity which those may expect from thee, who continue dedicated to thee in changeless fidelity even until death.

OCTOBER 29.

Reasons for perfect Resignation to God.

Complete resignation to the will of God is the surest means of resisting and surmounting the perplexities and the troubles of the present life. For who is the Lord, to whose will I abandon myself? He is the Lord Almighty, who, with a single word, can put an end to all my disquiet, who has sufficent power in his hands to satisfy all my necessities, to change my anxieties into hope, and extricate me out of all hazards. Wisely, therefore, do I consult for my happiness and tranquillity when I place my dependence on him. He sendeth both counsel and help as often as I have need of them. That which seemeth impossible to man is an easy matter to his omnipotence:—yea, the more vain the aid of men appears, the more does he assist me and support me, in order that I may expect everything from him, and not fix my

reliance on mortals. It is even to the will of a wise God that I submit myself. The wisest motives, and the kindest views, always constitute the basis of his decrees, and adversity and prosperity issue from the dispensations of the Lord of my existence. I dare not desire that his ordinances should be explicable to my narrowly confined understanding. I see not, indeed, whither the way in which he leads me may carry me; but because his finger has traced it out I am enabled to advance in it without fear.

Great God, wherefore should I not confidently relinquish my soul to thy charge? What have I to dread if, on all occasions, I fix my affiance in thee? While I have hitherto desired to be my own master, and the arbiter of my own fate, so long have I erred in my own plans. The result has never accorded with my own wishes, and with the principles of my mode of action. I have derived no other profit from them, than that of drawing upon myself every day new embarrassments and new vexation. When I sought to establish security for myself, I prepared for myself a fall That which I deemed a defence rose against me. O! my God, how much safer it is when I leave thee to rule alone, and when I do nothing save that which thou willest.

Far be it then from me that I should begin this day also with foolish schemes, and expect the happiness of my life, and the success of my endeavours, from my own knowledge. No, on God, and not on my own prudence, will I build my felicity, and never forget that everything rests on God's blessing. I will live quietly and contentedly, and indulge no cares and sorrows, but commend my steps to thee, my Preserver. I will cast all apprehension into thy bosom, and look forward, confiding in the wisdom wherewith thou wilt govern it. I will submit myself to thee without seeking to explore into thy purposes, or censuring thy appointments. All that concerns me I will yield up to thy sway, and so will my peace and my happiness be complete.

OCTOBER 30

Necessity for Spiritual Vigilance.

My heart, even in its best disposition, is always inclined to carelessness and security. I am every moment exposed to the danger of falling into sleep. I live here as it were in the twilight, and in comparison with the spiritual world, may be regarded as a man half in slumber and half awake. I here behold heavenly things but darkly, and my faculties manifest themselves with a very small effect. But I shall one day awake to a new life of a more perfect nature, and then enter into a wider circle of activity, shall strive with higher powers to attain my aim, and then also be no more subject to sensual influence. I cannot therefore be sufficiently watchful, nor keep myself too constantly on my guard, that I may not sink into perilous supineness. For in this world almost everything tends, ere I am scarcely roused, to lull me again into my torpor. The vain scenes of this life perpetually divert my thoughts from my eternal destination. They shut my eyes against the impression of the better world, and all the objects which appertain to it. Now earthly cares stun me, and now the lusts of the world rock me in the cradle of deceitful repose.

In this danger do I at present find myself, as I stand on the point of entering anew into my intercourse with society. If I enter again upon life with too great a confidence in my strength, or abandon myself with heedlessness to the world, I shall unquestionably be lost. Watchfulness is in all respects absolutely necessary for me. The more I watch over my soul, the more prepared shall I be for the coming of my Lord and Judge, and the better qualified to satisfy all my duties and obligations. I shall be less alarmed under disasters, if my soul remains constantly mindful of its high destiny, and my thoughts and actions have their place in heaven.

O God, awaken me out of the slumber in which I perhaps still lie. I have already spent too great a portion of my life in idleness and sleep. It is time to awake, since my salvation is nearer at hand than I suppose. It is time to be watchful, since death is perhaps but a few paces distant from me.

Would that I might be as industrious in the business of my soul as I shall to-day be in the affairs of my earthly existence. Would that so many blessings, which I have once more to anticipate from the mercy of God, so many chastisements, which God will permit to have their course both in myself and in others, so many stirrings of conscience which I experience, would that all these incentives might have so much power over my heart as to prompt me solicitously and seriously to reflect on everything that may conduce to my peace! O Lord, I confess that it is not in my own ability to effect this. But do thou awaken my heart, do thou move my conscience, and probe me to the innermost of my soul. Let this day be an image of my future life, as the past night was an image of my former conduct. Let me fulfil all my duties with alacrity and zeal, and ever retain a lively remembrance of the destination to which through Christ Jesus, I am called.

OCTOBER 31.

The different Recollections of different Men at the Close of the Month.

How can I otherwise than with exultation and thanksgiving come before thee, O Lord, three Persons and one God, now that I am about to pass with the present day over an important stage of my pilgrimage? In a few hours this month also, which composes so considerable a portion of my life, will be at an end. Many of my brethren will perhaps to-day calculate all the advantages and earthly gain which this month has conferred upon them. The libertine will review, in memory, the pleasures in which he has absorbed and dissipated his time, and invent new intoxications for his reckless heart. The miser will compute the sums which he has collected, and devise new plans for the increase of his treasures, and with these for the multiplication of his cares. The man of learning will congratulate himself on the knowledge which he has acquired through his labour and perseverance; and his spirit, occupied in new researches, will long anxiously after new attainments. And thus each, according to his cir-

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cumstances and propensities, will seek those ideas which afford to him agreeable recollections. And what can I do better than employ myself with the remembrance of those benefits which the benignant hand of my Preserver has throughout one entire month showered down upon my head, and venerate and praise this beneficent and blessing goodness?

Be praised, O Lord, my Benefactor, for the innumerable multitude of the tokens of thy love with which thou hast enriched me! All has been kindness that I have received from thee; and those dispensations, which my obscure understanding deemed evil, have been pure benefactions. I should undoubtedly be far more hardened, insensible, and light-minded, had I not become wiser through thy humiliations. I thank thee, therefore, likewise, on account of the sufferings which I have in this period experienced, and by which I have been rendered more rational and lowly.

Be praised for the indulgence and long-forbearing patience with which thou hast dealt with me in my transgressions and my follies! Ah! Lord, how justly had I deserved to be visited by thy punishments, and snatched off from the earth. But, in all my offences, thou hast cherished towards me the thoughts of peace; and, for this, in deep reverence do I adore thee.

Be praised for this precious and blissful moment, in which, thou all-hallowed Being, I am permitted to discourse with thee in prayer! Look down upon me with an eye of approbation, and hear me when I call upon thee. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake, those hours of which the end of this month so painfully reminds me. Pardon my ingratitude, through which I have wronged thee and debased myself. Absolve me from my hidden and unperceived faults, O thou my God and my Father. Rule me through thy Spirit, so that amid the feelings of abashment with which I reflect on the past days, I may at least be able to think of this closing day of the month without shame and without regret.

NOVEMBER 1.

The Sinner's Comfort.

NOTWITHSTANDING all that I may invent or allege in order to diminish my guilt, and to screen and defend my errors, it is still in vain that I seek to deceive myself. Yes, I am a sinner, and even my most sincere and painful repentance cannot expiate the offences with which my conscience accuses me. O! that I could erase out of the book of my life those transgressions of which I cannot think without shame! Yet, praised be God! even, under the conviction of my culpability, comfort and consolation do not fail me! My faith is that which consoles me: from the cross of my Saviour there comes a balsam for my wounded heart; my soul cheereth itself with the thought of its divine Redeemer, who, though he knew no sin, yet died the death of sinners, that he might cancel the guilt of his fallen brethren. But do I then also belong to the ransomed of Jesus? Dare I boast that I have a participation in the benefits of his atoning death?

I cannot bear the glorious testimony to myself, that I have faithfully followed the footsteps of my Lord and Saviour: I know not if he would recognise me for his own, if I should be now raised up to him through death; but I know that I believe in him with sincerity, and therefore I shall not be lost, but have eternal life. Would only that my faith had always shown itself in my conduct! would that it had been visible in deeds of love and mercy! But how often have I forgotten that it pleases Christ to know his followers by the love which they bear to each other! How often have I violated his most particular and chief commandment when anger and enmity envenomed and agitated my soul! O! that I might yet succeed in becoming like unto thee, my master and pattern, and so love, as thou lovest thy household, even to the end! O! that I might for ever banish from my heart every feeling of enmity, all uncharitableness, and all obduracy, and become, as thou wast, gentle and humble!

NOVEMBER 2.

The Emptiness of Honour, Riches, and Prosperity.

Ought I not to thank thee, thou Source of life, who permittest me again to behold another day? Ought I not to praise thee, thou Father of light, through whose grace I am allowed to enjoy the light of this morning? For although human life is filled to the brim with so much disquietude and so many troubles and sorrows, that its prolongation may be considered as an increase of afflictions, yet I have sufficient reason to regard it entirely on the opposite side, and to consider every day which God vouchsafes to me as an especial blessing. It is not earthly goods which make me happy: neither honour, riches, nor prosperity are capable of satisfying my spirit! only the consciousness of innocence, of truth, and of piety, produces for me that peace of mind, without which no real felicity can subsist. Should I then, indeed, envy him who forgets God, and to whom everything in the world happens according to his wish, but whom punishment will overtake, and whom even in the midst of his pleasures, his bad conscience often torments? No; I will be contented with the humble lot which God has assigned to me, and which, small as it is, far surpasses my deserts. I will readily dispense with many conveniences and gratifications, I will bear with patience and composure every other species of calamity, if I have no reproaches of conscience to endure. For among all distresses, the pangs of remorse are the most severe, and amid all losses, there is not one so irreparable as that of the grace and approbation of God. The recollection of good actions, the assurance of the friendship of my God, the hope of a recompense rich in the divine favour,—these possessions diffuse such rapture through my whole soul, that I would not exchange them for all the treasures of the earth. I can never repent of having made such a sacrifice if I relinquish terrestrial advantages and delights to retain a pure conscience; I can never regret any worldly detriment which I may have sustained through integrity, and the faithful discharge of my duties; and it will be easy for me to support every temporal want if I am abundant in holiness.

What could, indeed, happen to me under which my undefiled conscience and my faith would not be able to afford me abundant comfort? Therefore do I accept, O Lord, thy benefaction, which furnishes to me a more extended period of life without murmuring; for I have weighed the natural uneasiness of our mortal condition and the happiness of a tranquillized heart against one another, and I have found the scale inclined to the latter. I thank thee for this day, as a precious opportunity which I may employ in my preparation for eternity. O! let me spend it, I beseech thee, under thy gracious charge and governance. Above all, never let the purpose and scope of my life depart from my eyes, but let me throughout all my doings, evince that I am forcibly persuaded of my destination for immortality.

NOVEMBER 3.

The Weakness of the Heart.

When I inquire whence it arises that I so often relapse into the errors which I had abjured both before God and to myself, I find, with regret, that my own heart is the foe which I must vanquish, and that the instability, carelessness, and timidity of this heart constitute the exhaustless sources of my discontent. I know and feel its weakness, but I never succeed so far as to change this weakness into strength. How often have I deemed myself strong enough to resist the charms of sin, and yet fall ignominiously subdued: and never was I further from conquest than when I foolishly assured myself of victory. O! how was my pride confounded when I felt sensible of the feebleness of my heart anew, and at the same time, perceived the bonds with which the lust of evil had enchained me? I saw my enemy from afar, I went steadfastly towards him courageously to fell him to the ground; but, ere I reached him, I was myself thrown down by the snare which he had laid for my rashness, and I became the slave of a vile insidious victor. In what company—O! how ashamed is my heart of this—was I compelled to adorn his triumph! And how should I, at length,

have been lost without rescue, if the Champion out of Judah had not come to deliver me from my destruction!

To him I am indebted for knowing the weakness of my heart; for the means by which to remedy the defect; and for being able to watch over myself and to pray. To him I owe the fortitude arising from the belief that God will send me assistance if I earnestly supplicate him for it. And how frequently have I already experienced this support when I have undertaken a good work; have opposed a temptation which I could not avoid; have made a sacrifice which the duty of love required from me; or have endured with patience a suffering which exposed my constancy to a severe ordeal.

Be, therefore, comforted, my soul! Thou hast already gained much when thou perceivest thy own weakness. That thou hast so often hitherto failed arose from this, that thou conceivedst thyself capable of standing by thy own force alone. Thou art frail, and for this very reason thou hast need of a stay. Look and behold Jesus, who has done penance for thy sins; thy Jesus himself was tempted for thee. He knows the whole force of allurements; the peril of temptations; and the hardships of the battle against wickedness. Shall he not come forward, overflowing with affection, to the aid of thy infirmity? Yes; rich in help, he accompanies thee in the might of his love. O! my Saviour, let me then be evermore convincingly persuaded of the weakness of my heart, but not less so of thy willing readiness to sustain me in all my trials. Then shall I never let my courage sink, but, as long as I live, continue to combat, relying on thy divine, invincible power, and ultimately crown myself with victory.

NOVEMBER 4.

Time not sufficiently valued.

How rich is my own life and the life of every man in the wonders of divine mercy, how rich in memorials of the divine omnipotence and wisdom! Every new living day

which God presents to me—to me who so often, in my foolish blindness, occupy myself in abridging my life—is a new instance of heavenly compassion. For what is more precious, what comprehends more blessings, or is more conducive to my salvation, than time, this season of preparation for eternity? When I employ it with strict care; when I allow no hour to be lost in idle indolence or in sinful lust; when, with renovated and invigorated zeal, I every day prosecute the business of my moral improvement, of my amendment, and of my spiritual edification; O! then I sow that seed whose fruit I shall eternally enjoy, and prepare for myself a felicity that cannot be disturbed. Therefore ought a single squandered or lost moment to occasion me more sorrow than if I had been disappointed in some great expectation of prosperity. And yet this time, which is so valuable, is often a burden to me; yet do I long after amusements in order to shorten it; yet is my whole life nothing else but one incessant exertion to destroy it! So inconsiderately, so negligently, and so foolishly do I act in regard to the most important gift which God has entrusted to me. My service I reserve for my friends; my benefits for my favourites; my power and interest for my relations; my commendations for those who seem to deserve them: but my time I lavish upon the whole world, and leave it a prey to every one.

But shall I then always continue merely to make these complaints against myself, without ever inquiring how I may become wiser? Shall I delay to avail myself of the hours, the use of which must decide my everlasting destiny? Shall I still live without knowing why I do live? Shall I still throw away that time of the value of which I am convinced? Ah! God, preserve me from this misfortune which might be the origin of my eternal perdition. Here I must put a stop to my thoughtless insanity. I must compute the time which I have already extravagantly dissipated, and employ to the utmost advantage those days which may still remain to me. Whether their number shall be great or small, I am in both cases unfortunate, if I devote them not to a good purpose. Should I still live long, my apology will be the more difficult. Should my period be short, I may be called unexpectedly to that tribunal by which my eternal fate will be determined. Lord, render me wise unto salvation, and let

me to this end employ all my days, hours, and minutes, according to thy will

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NOVEMBER 5.

Working out Salvation.

Every morning is a new incitement to me to labour for my salvation, in like manner as it is for me a new encouragement to exert myself with integrity and zeal in my earthly affairs. In regard to the latter, I shall be instigated by my own interest to act as providently and as circumspectly as possible. The smallest advantage puts me in motion, and prompts my most strenuous endeavours. The care of my prosperity, the duties of my vocation, my domestic cares, toil and rest,—each has its peculiar and fixed hours and moments. But am I also in respect to my eternal welfare thus earnest, thus busy, thus industrious? does the salvation of my soul lie as closely to my heart as my worldly happiness?

If I regard my past life, and act on the same principles as I have hitherto observed, this question will be speedily resolved. Hitherto I have allowed myself to be besotted by the error of the great multitude. Hitherto I have devoted to salvation only the fragments of my time, while I have bestowed the almost entire portion on the world. Hitherto I have offered but moments to God, while I have sacrificed to myself whole days and years. Hitherto I have done everything for the world, and nothing for heaven. And my heart prophesies to me that the present day will be spent by me in similar endeavours. But what judgment shall I one day form of that contradiction in which I am involved with my self, of that carelessness with which I trifle with my eternal welfare, of that levity with which I advance forward to the day of retribution? Where will my soul find rest, when it suddenly beholds itself at the termination of its mortal course? What shall I reply to the Judge, when he extorts from me an account of the manner in which I have employed my existence? It is in this point of view that I ought to consider all my actions; according to this scale I must measure all

my works and performances. Herein consists the wisdom which my Saviour has recommended to me. I may have great natural powers, yet if I employ them not to my salvation I am still a child. I may possess all science, but if I am void of godly knowledge I am still a fool. I may obtain immense riches, but if I lose the treasures of heaven, I am still the poorest among men. I may be invested with all privileges and dignities, but if the nobility of Christianity does not decorate me, then am I contemptible. These are the sole maxims according to which I ought to decide upon my conduct, and they are those, in unison with which God himself will at his own season pass sentence upon them. O! then, nothing ought to be so precious to me as solicitude for my perpetual felicity. Besides this I have, properly speaking, nothing to do in the world. Of my whole life this is the only real and essential concern. All the rest is a mere vision and delusive trickery, if it stand not in connexion with my eternal destiny. My soul's salvation must therefore, during this whole day, constitute my chief and serious business. The fear of God must sanctify all my efforts; faith must discipline them; religion must animate them; reverence for the Lord must direct them. In a word, salvation must be the centre towards which all my actions must tend.

NOVEMBER 6.

Duty of being prepared for Death.

WHEREFORE ought I, as often as I awake from sleep to new existence, immediately to think of death? Wherefore ought I, ere my eyes are yet fully opened, to anticipate the hour in which they must be closed for ever? Wherefore ought I, when I am but just entering into the world, to revert in idea to the time when I must bid it my perpetual farewell? If I consider how nearly my life touches to the confines of death, and how unexpectedly the latter may invade me, I cannot fail to conclude that it is both wise and necessary to connect reflections on death with thoughts of life. The single conviction that my final hour may suddenly surprise

me, is more than sufficient to instigate my heart to uninterrupted preparation for the arrest of its now animated pulse. O! how rich is the harvest which death this morning cuts down! How many will in this very hour in which I am decking the early altar of devotion with its humble offerings, pour forth to God their last prayer in this world! Let me transport myself in imagination where I please, there is no single moment to be found which may not prove my last. There has been no deed of renown which has not terminated in the grave. There is no day of festivity which may not finish in funeral celebration. There is no food that may not become for me a fatal poison. There is no sleep that may not convey me to the long slumber of the tomb; no morning which may not deliver me over to the steeled arm of death; no indisposition which may not bring with it the fiat of my decease.

By what argument, therefore, can I justify the inattention with which I live with regard to my last hour? Shall it be my youth?—but this is the very thing, on account of which I take to myself heed; for it is actually the most dangerous period of human life: or is it my firm health?—but the best health is a mere spark, which the slightest puff may extinguish. Shall I then allege my temperance and regularity of living? Alas! neither are these any impregnable rampart against the assaults of death. It is therefore, in every point of view, essentially requisite that I should keep my end continually before my eyes, and, through the grace of God, advance myself into that state in which I must desire to die.

And, O! would that the undiverted influence of these meditations on death which I this morning pursue, might accompany me through every part of the day! Would that I might hence draw incitement to godliness and philanthropy, and consolation under the various disasters of life! Would that so many instances of mortality as every day presents to me, might lead me to the natural reflection that I, like all my brethren, am only dust and ashes! And would, moreover, that I might then be so wise as to consider maturely and effectively that which will follow after death! The wiser I become in this respect, the happier will be my days here, and the more tranquil will be their termination.

NOVEMBER 7.

The proper Estimate of Life.

SINCE every new day introduces thee, O! my heart, into a new school of trial, struggle, and temptation, do thou imbibe those lessons of wisdom which are able to promise thee a happy issue out of all thy trials, and a soothing cordial under all thy sufferings. Consider, in the first place, that God is not indebted to thee, and that, did it please him to exercise his equity towards thee, thou wouldst have nothing to expect but want and misery. On this account, therefore, receive the afflictions of life as the only portion that is due to thee; but regard the good which thou enjoyest as nothing else than the free gift of the All-bountiful. The earth is not formed to be a heaven, neither is it a valley of misery, notwithstanding that the impatience and the ingratitude of men often apply to it that appellation; and that their folly, their lawlessness, and their inconsiderateness often in many respects render it so. It is well for me that the world is no heaven, and that this temporal life is no perfectly happy existence; for it is through this very circumstance that life becomes a school of trial, and instructs me in wisdom and piety: though even in an imperfect condition, joy and felicity will not abandon me, if I be but contented, holy, and devoted to God. For then do I chiefly experience pleasure when sufferings have been surmounted, when a calamity has been sustained, or a difficulty overcome. And how gloriously has the benevolence of my God frequently exhibited itself towards me in my evil days, and manifested the wisdom of his ordinances! how often have I been moved to confess that even troubles are the blessings of the Lord! If I am thankful, abounding in trust, humble, and patient, I owe it to the distresses which God has appointed to me, to the trials to which he has subjected me, to the burdens which he has given me to carry. Without these my heart would not have been purified, nor my soul exalted, nor my spirit furnished with treasure for the skies.

Such reflections ought, under the Divine support, to confirm me still more in patience, and encourage me to be con-

tented with whatever my heavenly Parent decrees to me. But patience will not only produce mildness of temper, and impart to me the resolution of fortitude, but it will also render the heaviest oppression of adversity light, or at all events supportable. If I am wise, I shall fear no misfortune except the displeasure of my Creator and Benefactor, and so live that I may always hold myself assured of his favour. And what is there beside that ought to vex or disquiet me? The most poignant pains are nothing if they bring me nearer to that happiness which consists in unvaried contentment. Poverty is nothing, if I obtain the riches which God has laid up for me above. The contempt of the world is nothing, if I oppose to it the approbation of the Lord. Life itself is nothing, when compared with a blessed existence in heaven. Yea, death is nothing; for it is the beginning of an infinitely better life.

NOVEMBER 8.

On the Baptismal Vows.

WHILE yet, void of consciousness, I lay in helpless speechlessness in the arms of my mother, I was even then, through baptism, dedicated to the worship of God; and my holy vow, on the day of my solemn admission among the professors of Jesus Christ, confirmed the promise of my sponsors. How sacredly am I bound in duty, from time to time, to examine whether I have faithfully fulfilled this pious vow, which I made with the most heartfelt emotion, and whether I have wisely directed my life in the spirit of Christ Jesus, used my precious time with fidelity, loved my brethren disinterestedly, and zealously striven after the things which are above. Praise be to thee, my God and Father, that, enlightened by thy word, invigorated by thy grace, and comforted and soothed by thy promises, I am enabled to institute this scrutiny of my heart without dread and without shame, and to look back with joy to that portion of my life's course which lies behind me. This exercise of my memory is not indeed so completely blessed that I can regard the past with perfect

satisfaction; for my conscience accuses me of having often, in the indolence and levity of my mind, broken the vow of my youth, and often denied the Lord, whose hallowed name I am privileged to bear. Yet does my conscience not merely accuse me only; it also testifies in my behalf, that I have been always uprightly assiduous in repairing committed errors, and that with sincere repentance and deep confusion, I confessed my sin to thee, thou holy and just One, as often as I had transgressed thy commandments! it testifies to me that I have never ceased from labouring to improve my heart. Have I unfortunately not succeeded, O my God, in becoming wholly well-pleasing to thee, and worthy of thy blessing; yet still I dare to comfort myself with thy grace, dare to approach thee with filial confidence in prayer, and dare to rejoice in the belief that thou lookest upon me with love, and in the hope that thou wilt not withdraw from me thy blessing, if I am devoted to thee in changeless fidelity, and keep thy law before my eyes.

I renew to-day, in all singleness of heart, the vow of my early years; I think with confusion and regret on the errors by which I have disturbed the peace of my bosom, trifled with thy blessings, and rendered them nugatory. I am earnestly resolved to renounce the world and its lusts, and to bend all my efforts to my eternal welfare: this will invest me with felicity in heaven, when thou bestowest upon me the crown of righteousness, that thou retainest in store for thy true worshippers. No longer shall the world with its delusions lead my soul astray; no longer shall wicked passions and impure desires rule over it; I will raise myself to the dignity of the free children of God, by the conquest of my evil imaginations, and the improvement of my reason. Far be from me all conceit, even as if I were already perfect; far, too, be all carelessness and security; sacred be to me, as long as I live, the vow which I made to thee, my Saviour, when I was received into the fellowship of thy followers, into the bosom of thy church, and into the number of thy redeemed. Every day will I repeat it with supplications, and never will I be ashamed of thy gospel, however little thousands among my brethren may honour and prize it; for it is, and will ever remain, a working of the power of God, to make all blessed who believe in it.

NOVEMBER 9.

The Prosperity of the Ungodly not to be envied.

I HAVE no cause to envy the ungodly on account of their prosperity. Never will I supplicate thee, O Lord, for possessions which may be dangerous to my heart, and which afford no lasting enjoyment. I desire not the destructive repose into which the vicious allow themselves to be lulled; nor the wealth on which sighs and execrations may rest; nor the voluptuous pleasures which debase men to brutes; nor the glitter of that honour which may render me contemptible both to thee and to the upright; nor that uninterrupted prosperity which brings with it so much dissatisfaction. The only object of my wishes, the propitious accomplishment of which I expect from thee this day, is, that thou mayst be gracious to me. I covet not to share with them the false splendour which encircles thy despisers. But I cry to thee, that thou wouldst grant to me that power and strength which are needful to me, if I am not to be dazzled by this deceitful glare. I cry to thee for thy grace, that thou wouldst maintain in me that faith and righteousness which are the only wealth of the soul, and the only prerogatives that can claim for me thy approbation. Defend my soul from the temptations of the impious. I care not, then, how pitiable and foolish I may appear in their opinion. How could this, indeed, vex me, if thou deemest me deserving of thy compassion and thy favour? Can the world, which denies thee, highly estimate those who adore thee? Can the world, which finds its happiness and its joys in iniquity, promote my felicity?

No, I am convinced that the world cannot render me really happy. I expect the happiness at which I aspire, not from the world, but from thee alone, O my God. Thou permittest me to taste here already on earth, the first fruits of this happiness of bliss, through that peace of conscience, and that quiet of the heart, which are inseparable from virtue. These delicious sensations are frequently indeed disturbed through the deep corruptions of the world and of my own heart itself, through the dangers to which I am exposed, and through the adversities which I encounter. I only half feel the felicity which

attends upon godliness; but this little which thou givest me to enjoy excites my thirst, and increases my longing after more. If even this feeble fruition is already so potent as to indemnify me for all calamities, and to keep me erect under all assaults of misfortune, what must then be the effect, when I shall be placed in a state of unceasing peace, and of full and perfect enjoyment? How will it then be when I shall find myself in the bosom of thy affection, and become a participator of that blessedness which leaves to the saints nothing further to wish for? Then, O Jesus, will my joy be complete, and my entire longing contented. I shall then occupy myself only with the contemplation of thy glory. This employment will be for me an inexpressible and ever-new gratification. Yes, this supreme happiness will know no bounds, except the bounds of thy eternity.

NOVEMBER 10.

Sins of Youth.

WHERE should I be, great God, if thou hadst not spread out thy hand over me? Into what abyss of error, extravagance, and folly, would the sins of my youth have precipitated me, if thou, thyself, hadst not dragged me back, with a strong arm, from the destruction to which I was so near, and hadst not graciously and tenderly protected me? But erase from my memory for ever, O merciful Lord, these frightful images, of which I cannot even think without shame, contrition, and tears. I will not justify myself before thee: but thou knowest, compassionate Father, that levity and foible had more part in my juvenile guilt than impiety or contempt of thy statutes. It is true, I confess, that my heart withdrew itself from thy commandments, but it had not entirely cast off the yoke of thy Divine respect. It still honoured the God whom it renounced. It still trembled with dread before the Judge, though it roused him to vengeance. The power of the senses bore it along; but the faith and the grace of Jesus, which everywhere accompanied me, always arrested me on the brink of the gulf. In my mental darkness I supposed that the sea-

son of youth belonged entirely to sensual pleasure. Example and common consent seemed to confirm me in my error, as if all time appertained not to thee, and as if thou wert not the God of every period, and of every age of human existence.

O Lord, enter not into judgment with me, because of the sins of my youth, and remember not those transgressions which arose from rashness and ignorance. Annihilate this portion of my life, which I have spent in offending thee: blot it out of the book of thy retribution. I have in reality, O my God, lived only since I began to love thee and to be worthy of thy grace. I will constantly, O Lord, renew the remembrance of thy mercy. But do thou continue to show me thy ways. Do thou thyself clear the ascents by which I am to proceed to them. Be my conductor and my support during my pilgrimage. If thou deniest me not the aid of thy Spirit, then mayst thou strew my path either with briars or with flowers, since, when I am once on thy road, thy guidance will render everything easy and pleasant; and I shall, finally, through thy mercy, arrive at the shrine of my faith, the bliss of my soul. I resign myself, both for this day and for my whole life, to thy governance, and to the direction of thy Holy Spirit. Abandon me not, and take not away from me thy hand, O God, who art the horn of my salvation!

NOVEMBER 11.

The Wonders of the Heavens, and the Mysteries of Salvation.

While I now, O God of majesty, as the rising sun ushers in the day, regard the heavens, which thou hast expanded over me, I hear them relate the wonders of thy omnipotence. The spectacle of these thy heavens fills my heart with reverence and joy; and the consideration of the order and regularity with which those immense spheres move in their paths teaches me to know and adore thy wisdom. The first day which illuminated the world published thy greatness by the stately splendour of the stupendous orbs which began to rule it. And each new day propagated to all the following ones the mute

but affecting language which proclaims thy name and thy dominion. The constellations, which lent their brilliancy to the first night, still nightly celebrate the almighty power of the supreme Artificer.

With this so intelligible speech of the heavens and the stars, thou hast, O merciful God, united a still more expressive eloquence. O! what hast thou not done? How many wonders hast thou not performed, in order to bring men back to the ways of truth and happiness, which they had too soon forsaken? Thou thyself hast spoken to them. Thou hast prescribed to them the law, the fulfilment of which thou requirest from them. How wise are the commandments of this saw, how holy are they, and how much good do they diffuse ever human life, and what rewards hast thou decreed for those who walk in thy ordinances! In the observance of thy law I can find that felicity which I seek in the world in vain. O! how rich art thou, O God, in mercy, since thou already here on the earth recompensest us so amply. With wisdom I obtain all possessions and all delights;—peace of conscience, humility, and composure under adversities, moderation in prosperity, prudent foresight in all undertakings, and thy blessing in all designs; all these I gain when I attend to thy word and keep thy law.

Grant me, O Lord, a docile heart to hear thy voice, and a willing spirit to submit myself to thy orders. Let me not be deaf when the heavens address themselves to me; let me not be insensible when glorious nature declares to me thy excel lence. Vouchsafe that I may everywhere search out the traces of thy goodness and wisdom, and find my joy in contemplating thy creation with admiring reverence and devotion.

NOVEMBER 12.

Consolation under the Weakness of our bodily Nature.

As often as I awake from sleep I am impressively reminded of the weakness of my nature, and the frailty of my body. Neither is it possible but that I should sometimes feel sorrow, when I am compelled to consider this feebleness of my con-

stitution as the chief cause of my few and evil days. My spirit dwells in a body which almost daily gives silent admonition that it is only a fragile tenement, which may every moment be shaken to its foundation and reduced to ruin, or which has still to fear, in one and the same moment, both its shock and overthrow. As often as I take food and drink for my refreshment; as often as I feel a deficiency of vital vigour; as often as from weariness I desire rest; as often as I experience pain; so often am I warned that I ought to make myself ready for my departure out of this life. I feel the forerunners of my death sometimes less and sometimes more forcibly; but always in such a degree, that a great part of my life is deprived through them of its ease and satisfaction. My spirit experiences every day the inconvenience and grievousness of its dwelling, and the imperfections of its faculties; and from this source spring innumerable cares, vexations, and distresses.

Ah! what a most lamentable creature should I be, if to all these disquieting feelings and ideas I could oppose nothing but sighs and complaints, if no hope and no consoling prospect soothed my heart under them, and if no indemnification were afforded to me for so much calamity and affliction. I should then have cause to hail every returning day with tears and anxieties, and to experience as much vexation in the continuance of my life, as I now do in its shortness. But my fate is more fortunate, since I have in my faith a mighty comforter under my consciousness of corporeal decay. This it is which tranquillizes and upholds me in all the circumstance; that publish to me my approaching death, because it promises to me a better home. This enables me to bear with composure all sufferings which have their origin in my nature, because it assures me of the fatherly disposition of my God towards me, and of his divine aid. Through it I possess the means of substituting more agreeable images for those that are sorrowful. To present infelicity I can oppose an indescribable state of bliss, to this brief existence an eternal one, to temporal death a triumphal resurrection, and to this evanescent frame an immortal transfiguration. And these happy changes I need not once conjecture, hope, or wish for:—no, I may consider them as already present: nay, more; I may now beforehand taste and feel them.

How greatly, therefore, is my life sweetened through faith. Let me then cease to complain over the toilsomeness and misery of human existence. Far more ought the endeavour to become godly to constitute my daily care. Lord, qualify me for this purpose, and so fulfil the wish of my heart, O thou gracious hearer of my prayer!

NOVEMBER 13.

The Danger of earthly Joys and Prosperity.

How natural is it, that in the stillness of this morning, I should desire and petition from God a contented and happy day! And many thousands of my brethren will unite their wishes with mine. But is then the tranquillity which I pray for really profitable for me? Is it indeed salutary for me, that I should be quite free from troubles and pains of the body, and enjoy the goods, the honour, and the pleasures of the world, without any uneasiness of mind? But how if these fortunate days should banish me from the kingdom of God, and entangle me even deeper in that ruin which adheres to me from nature? How if they should stifle in my soul its inclination for the possessions of heaven, and the sentiment of the love of God; and fill my heart with such lusts as might rob it of the jewel of eternal life? How if these days of prosperity should make my mind proud and overbearing, and seduce me into avarice, voluptuousness, inhumanity, and insensibility?

Yes, so it is; the enjoyment of earthly gratifications is always dangerous for my heart and for my salvation. The more happy I am externally, the more am I subjected to the temptations of sin, and to so much the more formidable perils am I exposed. I am much better inclined to provide for my everlasting well-being under sufferings than under the influence of uninterrupted good fortune. Only one thing can rescue me out of the danger of these days of worldly success: only one thing can prevent me from being spoiled or rendered ultimately wretched through prosperity. The fear of God is the invaluable means through which both my pros-

perous and my adverse days become beneficial to me. And for this endowment I now supplicate thee, merciful and loving Father: for I shall then with the utmost confidence dare to expect that everything will accrue to my best interests. But I will likewise never forget, that I must direct my own efforts industriously to my heart, and watch it with all vigilance, if thou shouldst fulfil this entreaty. For out of the unguarded and idle heart issue wicked thoughts, and I shall be tempted and enticed even by my own lusts.

Thou hast implanted in my soul tendencies to piety, that it might not become subservient to sin. Thou hast through reason made me capable of rightly estimating the value of things, and knowing my own weal. How could I act so hostilely towards myself, as to leave unused the dear gift of thy grace? Discover to me in the grandeur of the world its vileness, in its riches its poverty, in its wisdom its foolishness, in its joys its misery, and in the happiness which it proffers to me certain ruin. Ward off the temptations of the days of pleasantness, and suffer not that I should prefer earthly and human gratifications to my eternal happiness. Godliness alone can, both in the days of sickness and of health, in the seasons alike of loss and of gain, in the hours of pleasure and of pain, and in life and in death, furnish hope and consolation. Preserve me, then, in thy fear and love; so shall I be able to dispense easily with everything else; so shall I be firm and composed in the midst of afflictions, and moderate and thankful in prosperity.

NOVEMBER 14.

Ignorance of the Future.

What will this day be my fate? Shall I continue healthful and prosperous? shall I possess enough, or shall I endure want? shall I live till its close? These and a thousand similar questions men will this morning ask, and thence occasion to themselves a disquiet both varied and abundant: for nothing torments us more than uncertainty respecting the future. And the objects just alluded to are those which oc-

cupy the human race as well in the cottage as the palace. To this contemplation the instructive fable, composed in reference to the same subject by the ancients, is strictly applicable:—

In a deep, retired grove their dwelt a venerable sage, who had roused, by his predictions, the attention of all the neighbouring country. One day an immense concourse of people flocked to him, desirous of learning their future destinies. He unfolded before each the book in which all the events that would occur to him, from his birth to his death, were written down. The multitude advanced singly in succession to the altar on which the book lay, and read by turns the history of their lives. He, who believed that he had yet twenty years to live, discovered now that he would die in a few days: he was struck with horror, and sought to peruse no more. Another, whom the possession of vast opulence had rendered respected and happy, learned that in a short period his wealth would be swept from him, and became stupified with sudden grief. The distressed man, who had been the author of his own wretchedness, beheld with despair, that he had yet many years to pine in poverty. In proportion as he had before been eager to know his fortune, he became miserable after having glanced into futurity. A father, whom affection impelled to the inquiry, was informed that all his children would die a terrible death, and expired before the very altar. After this unfortunate parent, many other individuals followed, all of whom likewise repented their curiosity, and were grievously dissatisfied with the manner in which their desire had been complied with.

Blessed ignorance of the future! In thee consists a part of the true tranquillity of this life. Thou renderest supportable to us the toilsomeness of our days, and our destiny on earth. It is owing to thee that, cheered by flattering hopes, I undertake with indefatigable zeal the most serious enterprises. I will never seek to look behind the veil which God has dropped over futurity. I shall be fully recompensed for this want of knowledge. However ignorant I may be of the secrets of my fate, they are disclosed to the Arbiter of my life, who, ere I was yet in being, ordained the entire course of my existence, and determined and regulated the whole chain of events by which I am encircled. And since

I know this, I can keep my heart perfectly at ease, and ever anticipate the best from his wisdom and goodness.

Inscrutable God! grant such a temper to my spirit, that it may constantly trust in thee, and rejoice in thy proved benevolence. Conduct me as thou wilt through this world; lead me through uneven, dangerous, and gloomy ways, if so thy wisdom has resolved; for even in those ways, under thy support, I shall obtain the salvation of my soul. Let me, so long as I remain in these regions of ignorance, desire to acquire no higher degree of information than that which thou deignest to vouchsafe to me. But finally translate me into that realm of wisdom and light, where I shall better understand thy guidance, and worship thee for ever.

NOVEMBER 15.

The Misery of deferred Repentance

As often as I am roused by any melancholy event or experience out of my carelessness, and carried into myself, I always make the sorrowful discovery, that I have not executed a great part of my good resolutions, and that I am still addicted to my former errors. Without remembering that, by every delay, I render to myself the important business of my amendment more difficult, I wait for the arrival of old age, and deceive myself with the hope that I shall then succeed better in subduing my heart. This is the seductive error which ultimately plunges all faithless souls into destruction. For is there even one sinner to be found, who purposes to himself to die in impenitence? All promise to themselves their conversion; and hence it arises, that almost all die without repentance. How many has death seized before they had determined to return to God! how many has it surprised in the very act of this determination!

Guard me, O merciful God, from blinding myself in the darkness of so perilous a mistake, and wandering from the course of my eternal welfare. Disperse the clouds by which my soul is still overshadowed, and which constantly obscure the rays of light which thou permittest to shine upon me.

I perceive clearly at certain seasons the hazard which is inseparable from deferring repentance. I say to myself: How easily might I be overtaken by death, and how unhappy should I be, were it to fall upon me when unprepared! Occasionally I represent to myself the sad fate which would occur to me, if I should depart from the world an unreformed sinner. I am often uneasy about my situation: nay, it frequently presses tears of vexation and remorse from my eyes. But the world and my own passions soon deaden and mislead my heart anew, and again drown it in careless levity.

O Lord, do thou open my understanding in regard to my spiritual state, and teach me to be mindful of thy judgment, and of the endless punishments which will overtake the souls that postpone their repentance, in order that death may not invade me while I am still delaying my religious improvement. For, alas! how much is there still for me to perform ere I can dare to comfort myself with thy grace, and number myself among the redeemed of Jesus Christ; how long must I still fight, ere I obtain the victory; how many days of life must still pass away without my advancing more nearly to my goal! Therefore will I not delay for a single moment.

NOVEMBER 16.

Supplication for the Influence of the Holy Spirit.

Awake, my spirit, to the blessed occupation of praising thy Father and Benefactor, and proclaiming his goodness. Behold, the morning invites thee to contemplate his wonders. Praise the Lord, O my soul, who gives thee the faculty to know him, and the impulse to glorify him. Though thy powers are too weak worthily to extol him, yet falter out his celebration, and let the angels instruct thee in thy thanksgiving.

O Lord of my life, how should I be otherwise than ready to exalt thy name, since thou daily replenishest me with thy blessings, daily presentest me with new proofs of thy love, and allowest me perpetually to behold fresh miracles of thy

omnipotence! Be praised that thou hast again enlivened my faculties, which lay dormant in deep slumber; that my body is fitted to minister to its soul, and my soul to command it; that I am able again joyfully and actively to perform that which, through thy support, is so pleasing a duty to me: all this is thy goodness. O! that I might use my existence, my life, and my faculties, solely according to thy pleasure, and to the promoting of thy views! O! that this day, which thou hast added to my years, might yet shine in the book of life! O! that every hour which hastens me towards eternity were sacred and dear to me! Yet how small is the number of hours which I live! how many flee away unavailingly, without being sanctified by a single laudable deed, or noble resolution, or by thy praise! Would that their rapid flight might remind me that moments are counted out to me here only to qualify me for eternity. Yes; let this great idea wholly and entirely possess me! Let it direct my employments, impress my conduct with wisdom, and hallow my joys. Let it inflame my desire of rendering mysell better; let it invigorate my brotherly affection, let it subdue my passions, let it deliver my soul from all that obstructs it in striving after godliness, and in at length becoming wise for salvation!

My Father and my God, thou seest in what a labyrinth I wander, and how incapable I am, without thy assistance, of arriving at the termination which thou hast marked out for me. Forsake me not, but lead me through a smooth path. O thou Son of the Father, my Redeemer, my teacher, my guide, send me thy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, that it may direct me when I stray, chastise me when I turn aside, encourage me when I am weary. When the folly of my fellowmen would seduce me, then do thou admonish me, thou Spirit of peace, and restrain my desires. If I am injured, then show to me the image of that love which bleeds for its foes, and let me be penetrated with that generous forgiveness. When my proud heart would exalt itself, remind me of the dust—yea, of the nought out of which I was drawn, and let me feel that, of all those whom thou favourest, I myself am the most vile and unworthy. When sensual pleasure allures me, then convince me how dangerous, how contemptible are all the delights which cannot be enjoyed with a pure heart.

And thus grant, thou Giver of all good, that, dazzled by no sinful lust, I may be wise amidst the perverse generations of men, may perform thy will, and consider myself as immortal. Shielded by thy goodness, guarded by thy angels, expected by thy heaven, what shall I wish? what shall I fear? Confident and calm, I await whatever thou hast decreed. Soon will my journey through the world run to its end. Soon shall I commence another era, in which neither hours nor days will be numbered, and when no changes of the year will occur. Soon shall I be with thee, sublime, ineffable Being, and through all the periods of eternity behold thee as thou art.

NOVEMBER 17.

Mortality.

Praise be to thee, O Lord, that through thy grace I receive, on every new day, a lively remembrance of my mortality; for we ought to be always mindful that our permanent residence is not established here, in order that we may seek heaven with true ardour. That I am not senseless and insensible, that I reflect this morning on my real destination—this is thy work, faithful, merciful Father. O! how soon do earthly cares and perplexities drive these salutary thoughts out of my heart! And if thou thyself, through thy Spirit, didst not operate on my mind, then should I, like so many of my fellow-mortals, go on without thinking either of myself or my final destiny. But how terrible would then hereafter be my departure from the world, how frightful thy command: "Set thy house in order, for thou must die!" I will not, therefore, shun the recollection of my death, but rather renew it often in my soul, that it may warn me from dissipation of time, and from a foolish attachment to worldly advantages and enjoyments, and that it may enliven my zeal and godliness, confirm my hope, and endue me with the wisdom to walk at all times before thee.

Am I inclined to grow languid in my duties, then teach me, O God, to compute the small number of my days. How can I delay one single good action, when it is so highly un-

certain whether, in future, I shall be able to perform it? When the lust of the world and its love would inveigle me, O! then recall to my memory the insufferable torments, and pangs of conscience, which my fondness for the vain things of life will inflict upon me in my dying hour. Should my heart thirst after the honour of men, then prompt me to reflect how little consolation titles and distinctions will bring me in the season which assimilates the king to the beggar. Should pride inflate my heart, then exhibit to me the wretched appearance which my body will assume in corruption. The consideration of death must rein in and temperate that covetousness of worldly advantages which so easily masters my reason, and impart to me that firmness with which I ought to sacrifice everything earthly when it threatens to bring my soul's safety into danger. In all the joys and the sweets of existence, let me be impressed with a sense of that felicity in which I am to participate on high before thy throne. Under the necessities of my present life, fortify me in the meditation of death, that in the expectation of a better life I may patiently sustain them, and hold out courageously in the strife.

In this manner may death become to me an edifying school for my heart, and may it deeply imprint upon me the knowledge that I am created for heaven and not for the world! Yes, Lord, I am a denizen of heaven, and only there can I find the repose and the perfect happiness which men so vainly seek on earth. Here, in the world, I only see through the mists of my mortal nature. I behold thee, O thou eternal Fountain of light, but not so fully that thy love fills my whole heart, and eradicates all the affections which still share it. Yonder, thy love will rule alone in my bosom, and absorb all other inclinations: yonder, this love will be perpetually reanimated and increased through thy adorable presence.

NOVEMBER 18.

The Prospect of Eternal Felicity.

WHAT can possibly be more cheering to my heart, and what ought, therefore, more to occupy my devotion, than the

love of my Jesus, through which I dare to expect eternal salvation? Never can I represent to myself sufficiently often, that felicity, without end, which God's grace in the gospel allows me to hope. What indeed can be more important than the persuasion that a soul inhabits within me, which is not only immortal, but which shall, after this life, be in perpetual communion with God, and become a participator of his divine bliss? What could more strongly excite my heart to sanctity than the reflection of the greatness and value of my destination, and the comparison between that which is here called happiness, and the felicity which my faith inspires me to anticipate? What can better satisfy all my wishes, and more accord with every nobler impulse within me, than that I should yield myself entirely to the desire of such an exalted and ravishing state, and give full scope to the godly resolution to aspire, with all my zeal, to the attainment of this ecstasy?

Yes, my Saviour, I perceive and feel how great the dignity is to which thou hast elevated me, by having struggled and suffered, even for me; I perceive and feel what blessedness it is to belong to thy redeemed, and to enjoy thy holy love. Would only that my conscience bore witness that I am worthy of this blessing. But how little am I so! This, on each examination of myself, I am forced with shame and regret to confess. Neither in thy fidelity to thy celestial calling, nor in thy charity and goodness, nor in thy sacred ardour for truth, do I resemble thee, my Saviour and Redeemer; and how far am I removed from the magnanimous temper with which thou didst endure the unthankfulness and the blindness of thy brethren! how far is my heart from the cheerfulness with which thou, for the sake of truth, didst support mockery and scorn, and from the zeal with which thou didst show compassion to the calumniated and the oppressed! But I vow to thee to-day, with a sincere heart, that I will hereafter follow thy footsteps with more earnestness. It shall be my task, for the future, to draw the bond of love ever firmer and closer towards thee, through whose love I am myself to be made happy, and to resign myself, with ever-increasing willingness, to the spirit that conducts to God, that I may thus constantly approach more nearly to the felicity which thy saving tenderness, my Mediator, and the grace of the heavenly Father permit me to hope.

Spirit of truth, do thou, likewise, throughout the present day, incline my heart to this, for me so important object. Loosen my soul more and more fully from those fetters of sensuality by which it is tied down: and grant to me thy grace, that I may ever penetrate more deeply into the knowledge of my salvation. Let me esteem nothing so highly as the care of becoming reconciled to God, and assured of a glorious resurrection. As in this early hour I elevate my heart to the Lord, so, likewise, during the remaining hours of the day, shall the thought of him engage my soul: I will love him and fear him beyond everything, and put my whole trust in him while I live.

NOVEMBER 19.

The Connexion of the present Life with that which is everlasting.

That I each day approach nearer to my grand boundary, the life of retribution, is a thought which ought frequently and seriously to engage my mind. Never ought I to forget that the employment of my present time determines my everlasting fate, and that eternity will confer upon me the blessed reward of every truly good work. O! that it might be my happiness to meet this retributive eternity with a pious and humble heart, consecrated to God! But terrestrial things still sway me too completely; my heart does not yet direct its efforts and inclinations with sufficient zeal to the things above, and I am still greatly deficient in that sacred ardour through which alone my soul can elevate itself to heaven. And yet how often have I already, with bitter grief, experienced the vanity of earthly objects; how often repented, that to the perishable enjoyment of worldly advantages, I have sacrificed my serenity and the peace of my conscience; and how frequently have I been taught that true happiness is to be found only in the consciousness of innocence and purity! Therefore I ought to cease so vehemently to lament over the privation and loss of mundane possessions, and to bear the sufferings of my temporal condition with firmer courage, since they assuredly conduce to my salvation. They are in-

deed sent with no other view than to prepare me for eternity My soul praises thee, O God, that thou hast granted me such a prospect into futurity, that a sublime hope comforts me, and that no feeling of the distresses of this passing time affrights me. Let but the other great duties which I have to observe for the future be likewise duly commended to my attention. Teach me to despise the goods of this world, since I have greater treasures to expect from thee. Make me apt and willing to renounce my personal interest, my repose, my convenience, my propensity to pleasure, and even my pride itself, when in thy service I am required to display magnanimity, philanthropy, and the other high and noble sentiments of the Christian faith. My brother needs my support; therefore must I assist him, and deem myself fortunate that I can do so. My enemy has injured me, he has formed designs of mischief against me; O! then let me forgive him from my heart, and convince him, through new benefits, that a professor of Christ is so generous as to reward evil with good. In everything let me evince my Christianity. Under afflictions as well as amidst pleasures, in the world not less than in solitude, in death equally as in life, let me show that I am a follower of Jesus, and a child of my Father in heaven. Let me prove, by my own example, into what elevated and happy characters the religion of the Saviour moulds its votaries.

NOVEMBER 20.

The Duty of loving God.

This day, all-beneficent Father, which thou addest to my former life, is another repeated proof that thou still lovest me, and vouchsafest to me thy gracious remembrance. When I revert with my thoughts to the past, O! what wonders of thy love, of thy faithfulness, and thy paternal benevolence, do I there behold! Thy care for me even preceded my being; and from the first commencement of my life down to the present instant, my welfare has been thy constant charge. Innumerable are the blessings I receive from thee; beyond calculation is the greatness of thy love. How feelingly is

my heart touched by the recollection of the past, how powerfully does it excite me to hope, to love, and to suffer! Thou who hast already done so much for me, couldst thou now desert me? Why should I, who have been already so long provided with all good, be to-day anxiously careful for the morrow? Thou hast carried me safely through many a storm of adversity, and shall I not now confide in thy help? Thou hast already so often convinced me that my whole destiny depends upon thee, and, by thy hand, and through thy infinite wisdom and goodness, is turned to my best interest; and shall I be discontented with that which thou appointest to me? shall I murmur against thee? I have so often seen that wickedness, lying, and falsehood come to disgrace, and that virtue and rectitude alone stand invincible; and shall I not always abhor vice and revere integrity? Thou hast always loved me so parentally; and shall I not love thee again? Thou hast granted to me my life, and all that rejoices my life in such indulgent abundance; and shall I not be ready to offer up everything to thee? Thou hast displayed so much tenderness for me; and shall I be hard towards my brethren? Thou hast forgiven to me the multitude of my sins; and shall I not cordially pardon my adversary?

O gracious and merciful God, since thou loadest me with such numerous blessings, and I cannot boast that I deserve them, neither in any way remunerate thee for them, how could I be ungrateful towards thee? No; to praise and to ponder on thy goodness, be this my most sacred and rapturous task. And if my heart is devoted to thee in thankfulness, how easy will it then be for me to fulfil every other—even the most difficult duty! But not until I am removed to a more perfect state shall I understand how duly to celebrate thy praise.

NOVEMBER 21.

Man's vain Desires.

O! THAT this morning were for me the beginning of a pious, happy, and blessed life. Then I should not only be neces-

sarily delivered from all need, but likewise possess all that my heart desires. Nothing capable of rejoicing and soothing my spirit would be wanting to me. Full of contentment of mind, I should then overflow with thanks to the benevolent Being who granted me all this good; and, zealous for his honour, I should devote myself to the service of virtue, whose follower I should constantly remain. Far from being rendered, by prosperity, forgetful of my Benefactor, I should rather then for the first time exhibit a restless ardour in righteousness. Wherefore are so many treasures lavished on the vicious? O! had I but a part of the fortune which they squander, what a laudable use would I make of it!

Yet how foolish are all these wishes, how seductive and dangerous are they for my heart! Should I not, then, be dazzled by the glitter of that transient prosperity which perverts so many, and leads them blindfold into perdition? Who can assure me that my weak heart, which knows not yet the temptations and perils of riches, would remain firm and unseduced when a thousand enticements and new opportunities of sin would present themselves to me;—that I should be strong enough to resist the torrent of allurement? O! how probable is it that I should then be forced to wish that my desire after wealth and prosperity had not been accomplished!

Yes, thou benignant and wise Ruler of mankind, thou showest me many and great favours which I do not thankfully enough acknowledge, and which I can never repay to thee; but this is most certainly one of thy highest benefactions, that thou fulfillest not all the wishes of my foolish heart. For this I cannot sufficiently praise thee, if I prefer my true welfare to the false glare and outward appearance of the ungodly. But yet I often forget myself so far that I murmur against thee, when, out of affection towards me, and according to thy unerring wisdom, thou deniest me that which I entreat from thee. O! make these thy truths rightly impressive on my heart, that I may never be tempted to desire any other lot than that which thou hast decreed to me. Persuade me more and more firmly that there is no calamity so great that I may not style it salutary, since it preserves me from trials of seduction, and renders me humble, patient, and satisfied. With this conviction I shall each morning be able to meet the new day with a smiling countenance: my heart

will always be replete with grateful love for my Creator and defender; and I shall have cause, even in the utmost necessity and want, to consider myself richer and happier than if thou hadst placed at my authority all the opulence of the world.

NOVEMBER 22.

Reflections suggested by shortening Days.

Lately the ruddy glow of early morn awoke me from my sweet slumbers, and my spirit then soared, in grateful matinal strains, up to its God; but now winter spreads around me melancholy darkness, and, by its long night, robs me of the few hours of the day. Scarcely does the sun surmount the horizon ere he already declines towards his setting. It is, perhaps, that he mourns for dormant nature; and would shut up the dreary fields from my eyes; or, is it that, like nature, my life shall now sink into the night of the grave? O God! Lord of day and night, how often in the brightness of my joys have nights of terror enveloped my soul at midday, when I abandoned the path of virtue; or, in the darkness of my spirit, saw not thee, thou Fountain of Light; or when through discontent, through anxious cares, and through a premature unreasonable dissatisfaction with thy guidance, I turned to my destruction the day which thou hadst granted to me for a day of blessing!

Teach me, thou Spirit of wisdom, the holy art of beholding thee in the deepest obscurities of my life. When all around me is night, in the hour of horror, when my understanding can discover no issue, be faith in thee my light and my comfort. Thou art the Everlasting Light, and where thou dwellest are light and brightness: but without thee, the purest serenity of day becomes in my soul a thick gloom: even the highest felicity of the earth is ruin for me if thy light does not illuminate me.

O! then do thou now diffuse around me the light of thy countenance when the wintry nights abridge the fleet hours of the short day. When darkness encompasses me, then

teach me to remember that thou art not far from us, and that in thee we live, move, and have our being. Then let me wholly devote to thee the hours which the briefness of the day subtracts from my labour for the welfare of my brethren! Here let me reckon over the hours, or rather the years, in which my life has been to me a dream. These years are flown—eternity cannot restore them. Yet thou hadst lent me each moment of them at usury. O! then let me now so much the more eagerly seek thee, and find, in the remembrance of thee, consolation and hope, in proportion as the work of the day is interrupted by the night, and the soul sinks into sombre reflections. When gloom saddens all amusements, let my soul be collected for serious meditations which have thee for their object; then be my evening sacrifice consecrated to thee; then let sleep rock my wearied limbs into gentle repose; and thou, my God, who neither slumberest nor sleepest, wilt also bless me in my rest.

Amid what blissful transports will my days glide along, if I retain thee, O Lord, constantly before my eyes, and in my heart! Then all nature will no longer appear to me terrible; but thy fatherly truth will, under all circumstances, be visible to me. Then will the distresses of this life quickly disappear; and I shall enjoy real lasting delights that will follow me out of the world into eternity! O! what a blessed state will it be for me when I attain to the fulness of that better life which knows neither vicissitudes nor change! Lord, let me attain to it, through Jesus Christ.

NOVEMBER 23.

The Christian's Joyfulness.

NOTHING can be more efficacious in rejoicing my spirit at the break of day, than the thought that I am a Christian, a denizen and inheritor of heaven. Embrace, O my soul, the entire extent of this thought, and consider it in all its magnitude. Form a just sense of the value of the honour that hence accrues to thee, and of the importance of the hope which such a prerogative imparts to thee. My spirit must

be wholly filled with gratitude towards, and penetrated with love for a Being so abounding in goodness, kindness, and truth, as he is who has vouchsafed to me this privilege. Should I be deprived of this thought, what would become of me! I should be a poor, ruined, cast down creature, without peace and without hope, a reproach to myself, and incapable of finding anything through which to obtain tranquillity. I should be loaded with calamity and sorrow, and never dare to promise myself permanent felicity. Poignantly should I feel my imperfections, without any hope of becoming more perfect.

Remove thyself, therefore, from me, thou fool, who takest pains not to know thy Creator; and who, though thou mightest be happy, through the blessings of religion, forcest thyself, of thy own accord, to be wretched and infelicitous. Thou art not only so unwise as to rob thyself of the greatest good in the world, but thou possessest also the wickedness to seek to tear from others, who have a better hope, this belief, the comfort of which constitutes their sole joy, in order to render them as miserable as, in thy ill-fated blindness, thou hast really made thyself. Or fanciest thou that thou art master of more knowledge and discernment than the majority of mankind? Or dost thou see that thou art liable to err in thy conclusions and judgments! that thou art also but a mortal, and allowest thyself, perhaps, to be misled into folly, merely through thy pride? Thus we are both exposed to the danger of running into wrong. But leave me only in my happy error. What harm will it do me in the end, though I should have been deceived? Has not the idea of a happiness to be expected after death shed joy and transport over my whole life? Was it not this hope which alleviated all my sorrow, which filled my heart with noble emotions, and exalted me to high-minded sentiments? Of all this thou must suffer the privation, and at length learn how bitterly thou hast cheated thyself. Wilt thou be able to support the torturing reproaches of thy conscience? Wouldst thou not, therefore, act more rationally rather to relinquish thy claim to the imaginary fame of a strong mind, than abandon the hope which must produce for thee happiness, whether it be well-founded or not?

I, however, O Father, cannot sufficiently thank thee, that

thou hast preserved me from so lamentable a state of comfortlessness, and hast granted to me an expectation which must be infinitely more precious to me than life, and all the treasures of this earth. Be praise and honour eternally ascribed to thee for this mercy.

NOVEMBER 24.

God's Care to promote our Salvation.

When I review the whole course of my life, and inquire how I have resisted so many dangers which threatened my soul, escaped from so many severe trials and temptations, and become firmer in the love of virtue, I am constrained with thankful emotion to confess that it has been through thy grace alone, my God and Father, that I am what I am. Thou producest in me both the desire to will and the ability to perform that which is good: thou hast been strong in my weakness.

Thy Divine wisdom permitted every event to continue to pave for me the way to salvation. But perhaps I only half perceive these inestimable blessings of God, being as yet unable to read the history of his providence towards me. But were the Lord to open my eyes I should plainly discover that all the events of my existence tended to the real happiness of my soul. I should perceive that the calamities which he appoints to me are nothing else but arrangements which the Lord makes to draw me to himself. I should find that many circumstances which I consider accidental, are fixed means which the Divine goodness employs to render the way to amendment easier for me. I should see that my birth, my prosperity, my wealth, and the faculties of my soul, have all conjointly reference to those views which God designs to fulfil in me. I should learn that all the moments of my sinful life, were moments of mercy. Sometimes God removed an obstacle to my salvation by a temporal disquietude or loss, which he ordained to me, and by which he brought me to humility. Sometimes he granted to me, through the good example of others, occasion to prosecute serious reflections.

Sometimes he awoke my conscience by the sudden end of the sinner. To sum up all, God has done everything in regard to me, and continues to do so, in order to attract me from the world to his own blessed communion.

But has the mercy of God accomplished its aim in me? Have I every day advanced nearer to him? Ah! God, how can I conceal it from thee?—thou knowest my folly and obstinacy. Thou knowest the opposition which I have made to thy paternal fidelity. Each day has been hitherto an incitement to reformation and industry in good works; but how seldom have I given ear to this exhortation! how seldom profited by the time allotted for my improvement! How gladly, were it possible, would I recall these lost days and hours! how gladly purchase them, could I but do so, with tears of contrition! O! therefore I supplicate thee, my God, graciously prolong the term of my earthly tenure: urge me not to a reckoning on account of so many abused blessings. But let me be more obedient and willing than I have hitherto been, and no longer, through headstrong obduracy and want of feeling, disappoint thy views. Lead me this day in the even path, and guard me that I may not again stray from it, but find through it the eternal life to which thy love in Christ Jesus has destined me.

NOVEMBER 25.

Proper Estimate of the World.

I HAVE already been so many years in the world, and yet I have never earnestly applied myself to study it in its proper light. What, then, is this world, of which I begin anew with the present day to be an inhabitant? It is a land of darkness. Truth ever finds in it either scorners or persecutors. Almost all men wander, without knowing it, in thick clouds of obscurity, while they consider their errors and their prejudices to be truth.—This world is a way full of dangers and obstacles. Everything is mere danger—danger in birth, danger in bringing up, danger in professional vocations, danger in intercourse with others, and in all the connexions with society in which

we can be placed. Do I escape one danger, I am instantly exposed to a second.—This world is a place of the most tormenting disquietude. Every one finds in his own station, however fortunate his lot may be, various descriptions of crosses and adversities. Grandeur has its cares and its mortifications; humbler conditions have their humiliations and contempt. All ages, all ranks, all employments of life, however different they may otherwise be, are all alike in fulness of trouble. Even youth is not free from woes and calamities; even piety has its sufferings; even the most tender connexions feel the uneasiness and the vanity of human existence.

What a lamentable creature should I be, were I compelled to enter into this world of errors, dangers, and disappointments, without thy support, O my God; or were called upon to resist all these perils and grievances, merely through my own strength! O! how happy am I, that thou thyself guidest me in the world, and that, led by thy hand, I am able to pursue my course in comfort and security. Thou clearest the darkness which surrounds my path; thou dispellest, by thy wisdom, the errors with which my heart has to contend; thou givest me abundance of better wealth, when I am poor in temporal necessaries; thou refreshest me through thy Divine consolations, when I am obliged to bear the privation of earthly joys and advantages. I can promise myself contentment in thy friendship, though I meet with few sincere friends in the world. I need not be afraid of sinking under the dangers of this life; if I only confide in thee, no danger will be able to shake me, no trouble to render me completely unhappy. Through thy grace, O God, I shall be rendered tranquil under every disquietude.

Now, therefore, I resign myself on this day likewise to thy heavenly guidance, Father and Lord of my life. Far be it from me that I should enter into the world, abandoned to myself? How easily might it happen that I should become more perverse and more unhappy than I actually am. No; my short existence has already sufficiently convinced me of the levity of my heart, and the corruption of my understanding. I will relinquish myself entirely to thy charge. And I suppliantly and humbly entreat thee not to withdraw from me thy aid and thy Spirit. Preserve me from the seductions of the earth, through which I may be rendered miserable, and

let me not lose the noblest donation which thou hast conferred upon me—my immortal soul, but maintain it whole and unpolluted amid all the temptations of the world.

NOVEMBER 26.

The Shortness of the Period allotted for our Preparation for Eternity.

THE time which is appointed to me for preparation for eternity is short, and I cannot make haste enough to use it. If I had a long series of centuries to live, lost days and hours would constitute nothing more than an imperceptible point, and this small detriment might be repaired through the length of my duration. But my years and days are confined within such narrow limits, that I should act most foolishly were I to reckon upon a long futurity. If I subtract from all the days of my lifetime, that portion which I must employ in the care of my body and my temporal welfare, what will remain behind for God and for eternity? And yet I am puzzled what to do with this little residue which is left to me. Yes, I have recourse to a thousand expedients to accelerate time, which is of itself so rapid that I am not sensible of its stay, but only of its flight. O! how deserving am I of pity! For ought I not to reflect that ten lives such as mine are not sufficient to compensate for the follies which I have committed? How can I, in so brief an existence, still find leisure for amusements and frivolous objects? Would a criminal condemned to death, who had only one day's respite to sue for pardon, seek to squander and destroy his hours and minutes? O! how mad am I! The sentence is already passed upon me: I have only a single day's time. And this single day is a burden to me, and I spend it in an inconsiderate manner amid vain, idle, and childish occupations, and I strive to abridge it! I see the evening closing in, ere I have employed the day which God has vouchsafed to me, otherwise than that I have become more culpable than before. How can I say that I had many hours during the day? Time is naturally so short, and my obligations are so innumerable and so important, that

how can I, and how dare I, then, longer loiter it away; or how dare I still devise new diversions to abridge it yet more by artificial means?

Great God, thou who alone distributest time and grantest to us each moment, with what eyes dost thou behold me thus dissipate that which is so brief and yet so inestimable! Thou knowest that the largest and fairest part of my life is already gone and consumed. Ought then nothing serious to be discoverable in the whole course of my existence, except the final moment which shall finish it? Ah! God, defend me from this unutterable, immense misfortune: do thou sanctify the few moments which I have still to spend in this world, and grant me grace, that I may use them to my salvation. This day brings me nearer to the grave. And, ah! what should I do if I knew for certain that only one step intervened betwixt me and my everlasting fate? How if I should now be carried off—what would be my lot? Eternal God, have compassion upon me, and endue me with wisdom to number my few days, wisely to order my scanty time, and to place every moment out at interest, since each may influence or decide my immortal destiny.

NOVEMBER 27.

Winter as well as Summer proclaims the gracious Presence of the Deity.

In the agreeable seasons of the year, it is true, the goodness and love of the All-highest are most visible. In the spring, most admirable and gratifying beauties present themselves to the eye: the air is a soft balsam, trees and flowers blossom, and wherever we turn our delighted gaze the fields and groves display themselves clad in recent verdure. In the fervent heat of the summer, God spreads out a canopy of leaves, and thickens the cool shades. In autumn his munificence covers the plain with plenty, and loads the trees with the most delicious fruits. But is it only in these agreeable periods that the friendliness of the Creator is felt and perceived? Bears not also winter signs of his gracious presence? Proclaims

not winter likewise his glory? From what source roll the hailstones? Out of whose lap gushes the sea? Whence proceed the gelid flakes of snow? Who tameth the stormy host of the winds? Who is he who, when it freezes, engendereth the hoar-frost, and produceth the snows? Who is the father of the rain?—Only thou alone, infinite Deity!

Yes, thy omnipotence and goodness, O God, are also evident in this rough and boisterous season. And in winter, too, is man the object of thy beneficent tenderness. The riches with which thou endowest him during harvest, nourish, recreate, and rejoice him in winter. All nature—the birds, the worms, the animals, both wild and domestic, are subservient to my covering and clothing. Everything convinces me of the unalterable love with which thou art attached to the human race. Everything publishes to me thy powerful benevolence, through which thou changest even the most disagreeable things into blessings.

O Lord, would that I might be observant of thy wonderful governance! If it be my purpose to seek thee, I shall find thee even in this harsh season of the year. If I am determined to glorify thee, even desolate nature in her icy dwelling will supply me with abundant themes. If I seek incitements to love thee, even winter, amid its surly blasts, will point out to me proofs of thy fatherly kindness: all the elements will announce to me thy greatness. And if the dumb creation could speak, it would exhort me to celebrate thy goodness and might, which are everywhere extended abroad. Make me, therefore, a witness and herald of thy compassion. Render precious to me this season, which is spent by so many of my fellow-brethren in useless engagements, in slumber and insensibility. Let me no longer shorten the already short space of my days in sinful and dissipated pleasures, but fortify and animate my zeal in the performance of good works. This season, which exhibits to me vegetation sunk in deadly sleep, shall preach to me my own mortality, and prompt me to look forward to the eternal spring, in which my ashes will one day bud out of the earth.

NOVEMBER 28.

Praise of the Divine Benevolence.

Thou Benefactor of all creatures, be praised for the rich blessings which thou scatterest around us. I adore thee, beneficent Being, that I also am one of those happy creatures whom thou every new day favourest with new gifts. I praise thee for all the blessings which, from the earliest instant of my existence even to the present hour, I have received from thee, and the number of which is so immense, and the value so incalculable. I thank thee also for the blessings which appeared evils to my misconceiving and mistaken heart.

I praise thee that thou hast strewed with thorns the way which leads to life. The children of the world walk in rosy paths which lead them to endless misery; but thou leadest thy children over briers, which wound only the outward man, while they conduct the spirit to the possession of the most unalloyed joys.

I praise thee for all the sufferings through which thou afflictest my corrupted nature, and evermore purifiest my immortal spirit, that it may become fit for thy blessed aspect. O! how far should I depart from my eternal felicity, didst thou permit me to rush franticly on in the riot of my lusts, and to forget that heaven to which, through the redemption of Jesus, thou hast exalted me.

I praise thee that thou so often frustratest my designs, and deceivest my expectations: that thou deniest to me my petitions, and causest me to feel how weak my power is, and how foolish my wisdom. I will follow thy signal, full of reverence and obedience. I will not murmur when thy dispensations are contrary to that which my heart wishes, since thou alone judgest with unerring certainty what will conduce to my peace. Even in darkness I will follow thee, nor expect the brightening dispersion of the various obscurities of my earthly lot, ere the season when thou shalt have brought me into the clime of perfection.

I praise thee for the sicknesses of the body, which are so healthful to my soul. They wean me from sensual things, and render me dull to their charms. They show the world

in that heavenly light which shines beyond the grave. They make me stricter towards myself, more indulgent towards others, and more humble before thee.

I praise thee for the new day which thou hast added to my pilgrimage. Thou art not yet tired of thy pity towards me: but thy long suffering still tolerates me, and thy patience attends my amendment. Benignant Parent! how can I with sufficient ardour praise thee for this morning? O! that through thy grace this further increase of my life might prove my blessing, and not my curse! This day, at least, must not be found in the circle of those which I shall have reason to lament, or even to execrate in my death hour. Rather must it shed over my whole future existence, over my death, and over my eternal state, the happiest and most beneficial influence.

NOVEMBER 29.

Love towards God and Jesus.

If I love God and Jesus, I shall never fail in comfort, nor want an impulse and incitement to good deeds. Whether I think of the past, regard the present, or direct my eyes to the future, in all cases I shall be confirmed in the resolution to remain unalterably true to the Redeemer, whose doctrine I profess. Truly the review of the past presents to me that portion of life, which I have sacrificed to the world and to my passions. But what consolation do I not find combined with this melancholy recollection! I cannot remember my former sins, without observing at the same time all the ways in which the mercy of God has accompanied me. I discover the particular care which God took of me while I yet pursued the paths of iniquity. I recognise the benevolent warnings which called me back without ceasing to my duty. And O! with what consolation and joy was my soul then replenished! How endless, O God, must I exclaim with the prophet, is thy mercy!

In the union with my Saviour, I shall also be inexpressibly comforted through those things which take place before my sight, in the world. That inconstancy, that injustice, and

that censure from men, which cause such disquietude to the children of the flesh, will only serve to teach me how happy I am that I have chosen a better master. But yet far more effectually does the future console me. I dwell on my hope of bliss, and on the ecstatic moment when I shall be associated among the citizens of heaven, reunited to my brethren whom I had lost on earth, and embodied in the immortal community of the eternal God. I perceive that though I even offer up the present, I sacrifice nothing; that in one moment all will have passed away; and that the affliction, which I suffer here, must be esteemed as a thing without reality, if I compare it to the glory which is provided for me. I see that the rapid-winged transition of all immediate objects does not once deserve that years or even centuries should be numbered.

O! wherefore have I not long since bowed myself under the sceptre of my Jesus, in order to gain these delights? Wherefore, in order to sweeten the past, the present, and the future, have I not sought a union with my redeeming Jesus? Hasten, my soul, with the dawning day, to ally thyself with the Lord, whose friendship must render pleasant every bitterness, and make desirable even that which is most repugnant to the flesh. Cast off the ties which still bind thee to the earth. Come and enjoy the liberty which Christ, the Saviour, proclaims to thee. How much disquiet does the memory of thy former follies cause thee! How much sorrow does the spectacle of the immediate misery of the world occasion to thy bosom! How much anxiety does the consideration of thy future fate awaken within thee! And how full of distress are, consequently, the days of thy life! O! cast off from thee this oppressive burden, and in Jesus seek repose for thy spirit, in him absolution from thy sins, in him joy for the present, in him hope for the future.

NOVEMBER 30.

Life and Death separated by a narrow Boundary.

When the speedy lapse of time alarms me I think upon

the comfort I possess in thee, thou Eternal; and, consoling myself with thy grace, look with more tranquillity towards the future, because it rests in thy hands. But I will also be attentive to the warning which thou wouldst convey to me by the swift flight of time. The beginning and the end of my days border closely on each other. The first moment in which I begin to live already announces to me the last: day is a forerunner of night: life is in the midst of death. In uninterrupted vicissitude one season succeeds to another, and with irresistible force they drag me forward with them into eternity. This is the doctrine which every setting sun preaches to me; but yet more strongly and impressively does this day publish it to me, on which I again conclude another month, and which brings me nearly to the close of an entire year. O! would that I had sooner reflected on the fleetness of my life! And would that it might now, therefore, be my lot that I should become wiser and better through this meditation! In manifold instances have I been reminded of this; and as often again forgotten it. I have gone onward under vain hopes with respect to the future, without remembering that man cannot call the next minute his own. I have constantly dreamed of a long existence, without noticing that every day, every hour, every moment, admonished me, that my life is brief and transient.

Far be it from me, however, that I should still longer live amid these futile visions and these airy expectations! Let this, the final day of the month, rouse me maturely and earnestly to contemplate my grand destination for eternity, and to break loose from empty phantasies and corrupt propensities. Who am I, Lord, that thou hast not long since cut short my days, and snatched me out of the world in the plenitude of my vain and fruitless hopes? O! how can I sufficiently thank thee, that thou hast so long endured me with indulgence and forbearance, and made every day a day of salvation to my soul! How can I compensate thee for those benefits which thou hast day by day showered down at my feet! Lord, I can do nothing more than confess to thee my entire unworthiness, and humble myself before thee. Accept, O my God, with thy accustomed mercy, this incense of a deeply affected and contrite heart, for Jesus' sake. Look with compassion upon thy servant, who solemnly resigns him-

self anew to thy guidance, and anew devotes himself to thy ministration and to thy love: and continue still further in thy longsuffering to bear with a sinner who can adduce no other merit than the fully-availing and sufficient sacrifice of oblation which Jesus offered up for the absolution and abolition of our iniquities. Make me rich in thy grace, and let the vow of my bosom be pleasing to thee. No longer will I wrong thy patience, no longer close my heart against the fatherly accents of thy lips; I will labour with sincerity and zeal to produce my amendment, and strive to become worthy of the grace which I to-day supplicate from thee, of the blessing with which thou prosperest me, of the patience with which thou dealest with me.

DECEMBER 1.

Tranquil Anticipation of the Future.

I SHOULD be unworthy of the goodness with which thou, O Lord of my life, hast hitherto protected me, if I did not look forward to the future with trust and confidence; for too anxious cares are sins against thy providence. How could I, indeed, still entertain a single doubt of thy merciful guidance, when every day and every smaller division of my life render visible to me the most evident traces of thy wisdom, omnipotence, and kindness? No, I cannot otherwise than with the most confident heart look towards the future, which thou, the same benign Deity who hast manifested thyself so gloriously in the past seasons of my existence, wilt skilfully and graciously direct.

Well do I know, that in this month, likewise, every returning day will give me new testimonies of thy propitious providence in regard to myself. I shall find in thee a Benefactor that loads me with his blessings, prospers me by his support, and rejoices me, though he also shames me through his love. Thou wilt be to me a Father, who treats his weak child with forbearance and indulgence, and tenderly aids him to rise, when he stumbles and falls. Thou wilt not withdraw from me thy gifts, although my corrupted heart makes itself so

often undeserving of them; thou wilt accompany my upright and duteous efforts with thy benediction, and thou wilt present to me, through the dispensations of thy wisdom, new incitements, in every vicissitude of my life, to bend my strenuous efforts to my amendment, and to labour to become more deserving of thy love, more confirmed in goodness, and richer in heavenly endowments.

I know that this month, nay, that even this day, will not be void of afflictions and sinister accidents. But I perceive, too, that I should be supremely unhappy, if I met with nothing that humbled my pride, punished my levity. and inclined my earthly-minded heart to better principles; and that the Lord even then confers favour upon me, when he bringeth me low and proveth me. And I most sincerely implore thee, O God, that thou wouldst grant me patience, comfort, and resignation, to accept with cheerfulness even the most painful visitations from thy omniscient will, and to acknowledge the tenderness of thy designs in everything that may befall me. In these things also thou wilt act more sparingly towards me than I have any claim to request, and not to assign to me a heavier burden than I am able to bear. I will put my hope in thee, and, through Christ Jesus, entirely abandon myself to thy goodness and grace. Lord, who hast never yet allowed any one who faithfully relied upon thee, to come to shame, let me also experience the healing of my belief, and feel how happy the soul is, that yields itself up with perfect affiance to thee I this day submit myself under all circumstances to thy government. What evil can happen to me, when thou art my God and my Saviour? What have I any necessity to fear, when thou remainest my refuge?

DECEMBER 2.

Our Contemplations to be raised from the Creation to the Creator.

With no other intent has God formed the world so beautiful, so diversified, and so charming, than that I might be attracted to him by the spectacle of it, and by its glory. I must there-

fore raise myself from the visible to the invisible, from the corruptible to the incorruptible, from the creature to the Creator. And in this manner can I even here attain to a union with him, and during my temporal existence prepare myself for eternity. All the goods and all the joys of the earth ought to conduct me to thee, O Maker, to teach me the greatness of thy omnipotence and goodness, and hereby excite me to confidence and love towards thee. This was the wise end for which thou hast put me into the possession and enjoyment of the blessings of this world, and provided gratification and felicity for my soul. And with this view I may every day fulfil, if I only observe, with attention, thy bounty, and the magnitude of thy works. In vain do I attempt to penetrate the secrets of nature, and to explore the laboratory where she prepares her gifts, brings forth her wondrous productions, and exerts her powers. How should I do otherwise than humble myself before the sublime Author of this wonderful and incomprehensible nature! All creatures are so formed—all things in the world are so ordered that they may afford me pleasure. How much love must, then, the Supreme Ruler of all things have for me? And who am I? Whence shall I procure for myself force enough to love thee in return, thou adorable Parent of all? Where shall I find words sufficient to laud thy beneficence? Thou hadst already laid the foundation of my happiness, while as yet thy eye alone beheld me. Thou hast prepared thy blessings for all creatures: no one is shut out from the participation of thy treasures. How sacredly does this bind me in duty, charitably and benevolently to permit my poorer brethren to share with me the abundance which thou hast committed to my stewardship!

But if the works of God thus overwhelm me with astonishment, how great and how admirable must the Deity himself be! How great, also, must therefore my felicity then be, when I shall behold him as he is! If a small stream of the celestial delight is already so pleasant, how ravishing must the source be from which all the tides and torrents of ecstasy flow! If a ray of the Divine light be so enchanting, how glorious will the sun itself be! If this place of my temporary, earthly sojournment be so beautiful, how much more so will be the dwellings in my Father's home!

Holy God, from whom proceed all devout inspirations, awaken me, through thy Spirit, to these lofty musings. Let me not be debased to the irrational animals, by directing my regards merely to the earth, without soaring upwards to thee, most glorious Lord. Graciously prevent me from suffering myself to be so bound in the fetters of worldly ideas, as to be prevented from launching my more serious thoughts into the regions of heaven and eternity. In all things let thy adorable attributes be figured to my conception, and so become to me an effectual impulse above all things to love and fear thee, and to place my trust in thy mercy. So shall I even here feel a portion of that blessedness which I shall afterwards enjoy in its perfect magnitude, when I shall no longer be forced to raise myself up from earth to heaven, but shall see thee face to face, and magnify thee with thy angels.

DECEMBER 3

The Consecration of our entire Faculties to God.

To thee alone, my God and my Father, ought I to appertain; to thee only should all the efforts, and all the feelings of my heart be consecrated. I ought never to allow my mind to be devoid of a strong sense of my destination, and never debase that dignity with which thy goodness has distinguished me, inasmuch as by investing me with reason and free-will, it has made me capable of subduing all my sinful and sensual propensities, and becoming similar to thyself.

But every day of my life displays to me improprieties which I have committed, or follies and errors by which I have disgraced my human dignity. If at any time I discover any goodness in myself, O! thou Fountain of bliss, how gladly would I increase it, and consecrate myself entirely to thee; for to thee be dedicated all those powers wherewith for the noblest purposes thou hast endowed me! Gifted with an intelligent spirit, I will hallow it to thee, and employ it in reflecting on the wonders of thy grace and power, searching into the truths of salvation, and educating myself for heaven. I have desires and inclinations;—lo!

to thee they shall be sacrificed. I will long after thy grace; I will covet thy wisdom; and the happiness of eternity shall be the aim of my endeavours. Do I possess honour, influence, and respect? I will devote them to thee. I will resort to every means that thy glory, my Creator, may be universally diffused throughout my sphere, and that thy excellent views may be accomplished. Do I possess wealth? I will make an oblation of it to God, and use it to sustain the needy, to comfort the wretched, and to refresh the hungry and the famished. Do I possess health and vigour? To thy service and to that of mankind they shall be entirely subjected.

O God, how supremely happy should I indeed be, were I this morning-hour really devoted to thee with so pious a heart! and dared I to hope, that I should always continue so, what a blessing should I provide for myself all the days of my life. But, alas! I feel how much force it requires to complete this offering. Do thou thyself remove the obstacles which prevent me from becoming wholly thine. Rouse me, through thy grace, to an earnest resolution and sacred zeal to dedicate myself wholly to thee. O! how sweet will it be, if in the evening of this day I can truly say: "I have now become more righteous and more pleasing to God; I have subdued my lusts, tamed my appetites, gained the victory over my corruption, and dedicated my heart to the Almighty." If I am able in all truth to bear this testimony to my conduct, then will my peace be secured for ever, and my felicity exceed all utterance. O! aid me, my Lord and my God, in the pursuit of this blessedness, with thy grace and with the support of thy Holy Spirit. Let thy grace prevail over the perverseness of my heart, and endue me with the strength, even as thou hast given me the disposition, to become thy property and thy faithful servant.

DECEMBER 4.

The Happiness of being a real Christian.

Many of my fellow-mortals, without doubt, esteem themselves already happy, if they behold this morning in peace

and joy; and if by means of riches and other advantages they are placed in a situation to accomplish their wishes, and to provide for themselves the comforts and pleasures of life. But how lamentable and uncertain is such a happiness! how incapable of enjoying their existence are those who deem themselves thus fortunate! They possess nothing further than earthly prosperity and abundance: I boast of the felicity of being a Christian, and of knowing the way in which I can find tranquillity for my soul. The happiness which Christ promises me is not subject to incessant changes and alterations; but it extends to eternity, and can convey me into that land where is the fulness of joy. My Saviour never flatters me with the expectation of perfect happiness in this world. Contentment is that which he has declared he will bestow: and this I may secure, if I follow his admonitions, let the tide of events flow how it will. From him I anticipate no such pleasures as depend on the gratification of my inordinate lusts. He deceives me with no such uncertain and contingent felicity, as that which I may hope for in health of body, in my friends, or in other temporal blessings. No; he presents to me such a happiness, as will, in spite of all the world, retain its resplendency:—a happiness that is compatible with the loss of fortune and favourers, with contempt and disgrace, with persecution and misery, and even with death itself:—a grandeur and dignity, which are only the more highly exalted by the most calamitous destinies.

Wherefore could I, then, when Christ offers such glorious advantages to me, act so foolishly as to strive merely after things, whose value and attractions are the mere chimeras of a carnal imagination? Is it not enough, that I daily observe in so many thousands of other men, what bitter disappointment follows the hopes which are erected only on a terrestrial basis? This day will afford me abundant examples of my former experience. I shall see, and perhaps be personally taught, how unfaithful is the friendship of the world, how transient are its pleasures, how tormenting its riches, and how vain its expectations. O! then, I must toil for those other and higher attainments exalted above the atmosphere of worldly vicissitude. Be virtue my opulence; be rectitude my nobility; be intercourse with God my joy; be faith in

Jesus my prosperity. Hitherto I have employed all my faculties, and so much valuable time, to catch an evanescent happiness:—ought I not to do as much for the happiness of eternity? Hitherto my care has been directed only to myself:—ought I not as a disciple of my most loving Redeemer to promote the welfare of my brethren? And since my real felicity and my soul's quiet hinge on these cardinal points, I supplicate thee, O God, that thou wilt assist me to conduct myself thus nobly and thus Christian-like. Conduct me into the ways where true happiness and true honour await me, and then maintain me in the disposition to desire nothing meaner than that which has been acquired for me through Jesus Christ.

DECEMBER 5.

Gratitude to, and Reliance on God

God, Creator of my life, and my bountiful Preserver! My God, through whose indulgent favour I rise to this new day, be thou my earliest thought! Thankfulness and reliance are the feelings which I devote to thee. Thou hast till now protected my existence, thou hast borne with me in patience when I stumbled, and hast heaped upon me innumerable blessings. For all this I thank thee, benevolent Father. Thy goodness has watched over me till now, that no misfortune might approach me. And only from thy compassion do I expect, for the present day, that help and support without which I cannot in my feebleness subsist. That I continue in a condition to be active in my affairs, and to contribute to my own happiness, and to that of others; that I and mine remain free from the dangers which constantly threaten both existence and health—all this is thy gift, and springs from thee. Thou alone art that on which my eyes dwell, and on thy grace rests all my confidence. Before thee I pour out my heart, and with a soul panting with emotion worship thee for the riches of thy pitying goodness.

Ah! I perceive, ashamed and penitent, how little I deserve the proofs of thy love. My life is a succession of

errors, inadvertencies, and failings. Every day—for each is a memorial of thy forbearing affection, ought to enliven and strengthen my zeal for virtue, and animate me to dedicate myself wholly to thy worship, and to love thee with all my heart and with all my soul: but my conscience reproaches me with having paid to thee only verbal vows of piety, and with having rendered myself worthy of thy long-sparing compassion by no amendment and no sanctification of my life. How many opportunities of becoming pleasing to thee, through works of love and wisdom, have I heedlessly neglected! how much precious time have I sacrificed only to worldly undertakings! how little have I aspired at that which is above! Yet contrition itself is acceptable to thee; and I, this morning, repeat my solemn promise of reform, which I will fulfil more faithfully than hitherto, hold perpetually sacred, and never violate again. How happy am I when I belong to thee, when I consecrate myself to thy worship, and wrestle for thy grace! Could I, indeed, be more so than I am by depending solely on thee? Be my entire fate commended to thy disposal; rule it according to thy pleasure, and lead me after thy counsel: thy will alone is my law. Govern my inclinations, my sentiments, and my wishes. I commit myself without reserve into thy protection and thy guidance. Let thy favour, which has thus far conducted me, be likewise near to me to-day. Be mine, be all men's benefactor and defender. Should my days be still prolonged, to thee let them all be devoted. Let me not pass any one of them without increasing in holiness; let also this morning the freshness of thy goodness be upon me. O! that I might on every future morning, be found more deserving of this beneficence.

DECEMBER 6.

The Sin of Discontentment.

I SHOULD be the most ungrateful creature that breathes, if I did not perceive that God has made me capable of happiness. For nature continually conveys to me new pleasures, and new enjoyments through all my senses, and to these

pleasures and enjoyments the feelings of my heart are adapted. Even though fortune and abundance are wanting to me, yet my heart, if only satisfied, affords me daily so many gratifications, that I may at least be contented with my lot, and have cause enough gratefully to praise the goodness of God. For my life is dear to me even from this very circumstance, that it is nothing but toil and labour; since toil and labour render pleasure every day a novelty, and the less I think how I shall enjoy it, the sweeter and more agreeable it is to me. Am I obliged to accommodate myself to the privation of many of those worldly advantages which, according to the predominant opinion of men, produce felicity; religion, wisdom, and virtue bestow upon me such blessings that, possessed of them, I shall not envy the greatest worldly prosperity.

I were, indeed, ungrateful if I should be either discontented or envious, since God has granted to me everything that is indispensable to my well-being; and those things which I may not, perhaps, possess, would unquestionably, if I obtained them, not render me happier, but probably make me unhappy. If I were rich, I should, perhaps, be perverse, or avaricious, or overbearing and unmerciful. Were I placed in a higher rank than that in which God has stationed me, I should, perhaps, think less of God himself, should evince more superciliousness towards my brethren, and become detestable through my pride. Had I more gratifications and amusements, I should wholly forget both my duties and my Creator, and lie sunken in lasciviousness and vice. And were my situation different from what it is, I should, perhaps, be spending this morning in actions that might involve me in the surest destruction, or, at least, in torment and remorse.

It is, therefore, one of the unacknowledged blessings which I owe to thee, O God, that thou hast fixed me in that station which is infallibly the most advantageous for me, both in time and in eternity. O! let me then also be thankful to thee for this dispensation, and not dishonour thy all-wise governance by murmurings and complaints. The lot which thou hast decided for me, the destiny which thou hast appointed to me, the prosperity which thou hast measured out to me, the sufferings which thou hast dealt to me—all will

prove beneficial for me if I only employ them according to thy views. The more I am convinced of this the greater will be my quiet and contentment. If I only confidently believe that all which may this day occur to me is salutary for me, it cannot otherwise than follow, that I shall pass my hours in the most placid tranquillity of mind.

DECEMBER 7.

The present World only a State of Trial.

If I regard my life on this earth in its right aspect, it must be evident to me that my existence is nothing else but a state of trial, and I need not, therefore, expect in the present world any unmixed happiness; for otherwise the world would no longer be a course of trial and preparation. If here I could be as happy as I desire, I should cherish no longing for eternity; I should little concern myself about the safety of my soul, but sin with still greater licence. The misery which I find in the world draws my thoughts from the earth, and inclines my heart and my wishes to heavenly objects; and the good days which succeed to the bad, the joys which accompany our sufferings, the alleviations and mitigations which are imparted to me in my hours of sorrow and anxiety, the hopes which elevate my soul—all these constrain me towards God, and fill my heart with love and reverence for the Sovereign of my life.

God has hitherto carried me through many dark ways in order to prove me, whether also in his hidden paths I should continue to put my trust in him, and not let my confidence sink. He has so often oppressed me with diseases and weaknesses, to impress fully upon me that the fleshly veil wherewith I am clothed is fragile and of short duration. He hath withdrawn from me the objects most cherished by my heart, to loosen my attachment to things earthly, and to turn to himself the current of my love. He hath allowed me in my brief pilgrimage to experience numerous changes and vicissitudes, in order to persuade me that this world is not the place where man has to expect pure joy and unwearied tranquillity.

He has delivered me out of so many dangers, to teach me that he alone is the Almighty, from whom proceed all help and rescue. But he has also permitted me to experience so many agreeable events, in order to demonstrate to me his goodness, and to try whether I would not let myself be allured to him through love and kindness. All, all that has happened in my life, and that is yet to happen, is to conduce to my trial and purification. So will I then, to this end, faithfully and wisely avail myself of every occurrence, and never doubt that God will, with me also, do everything for the best. And would that I might, with full conviction, perceive how good the views of my God are in this respect; that I might equally make the calamity which he may send to me, and the felicity which he may withhold from me, conspire to my preparation for eternity, and my exercise in godliness; and that to these wholesome purposes I might likewise employ all the incidents of the present day, and, through God's searching of me, become wiser and more virtuous! O God, do thou thyself beget in me an aptness for this result. Let me here, during the scanty term of my inquisition, preserve faith and a good conscience, and be hereafter installed as a proven champion in the kingdom of perfection and recompense.

DECEMBER 8.

Reverence and Adoration due to God.

With what deep reverence and awe must I approach thy throne, thou God of Majesty, now that I stand before thee, and would offer up my prayers to thee! How could I, otherwise than with deep humility, appear in thy dread presence.—I, who am a sinner, a poor, perishable mortal, how could I remain unmoved when I contemplate thy adorable attributes and works? The splendid beauty of the world announces to me thy boundless goodness; its immense extent thy almighty power; and its structure and arrangement thy admirable wisdom. But, when I reflect on the dispensations of thy grace, O! then do thy attributes beam in full radiance upon my eyes. I see how benignant, how righteous, how

wise, now mighty thou art; and the more profoundly I penetrate into the mystery of thy grace, the more is my spirit amazed. The more I study thy wonders, the more I am become aware that they are not to be comprehended, and that no understanding is capable of embracing them in its view. Thy omnipotence is inconceivable, thy omnipresence immeasurable, thy intelligence inscrutable. I lose myself in the contemplation of them, and stand at a pause with my thoughts· and after all my pondering, I close my research with this humble confession: "O! the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, how unsearchable his ways!"

Wherever my eye turns, it beholds thy miraculous and stupendous works. The heavens in all their pomp and glory, celebrate thee, the Architect who buildeth by his word—the never-failing God of strength. Thou hast planted the sun in the firmament; and hast clothed him in his fiery robe—in his garment of brilliant light. Which of the myriad stars dost thou not govern and know? O how gladly would I join in yon exulting strains of the perfect who encompass thy footstool, and offer up their adorations to thee; but my feebleness scarcely allows me a faint lisping; yet this lisping, O God, thou despisest not; to thee even imperfect accents are acceptable! My imperfect thanksgivings will not, therefore, displease thee. The time will be when I shall more reverently and more purely publish thy praise. So long, however, as I remain on the earth, my life shall be devoted to thy glorification: not my lips alone, but my heart shall extol thee.

DECEMBER 9.

Resolution to perform the Duties of the Day.

I AWAKE—the light of a new day beams upon me, and calls me again to the affairs of this life. The dangers of the night are surmounted, and I feel my limbs refreshed by gentle repose. Life and health are once more my property: be my first sensations, therefore, and my first ideas consecrated to

thee, the Creator and preserver of my existence. To whom, except to thee, are due the first fruits of those faculties which thou hast granted to me? God, my Father and my Lord, thy beneficent hand bestows upon me, with this new day, a new life to taste thy goodness. I had as little right to expect this day as so many thousands who have been overtaken, during the past night, by their fate—to whom sleep has become death; time become eternity; and who now sleep the sleep of death, never more to behold the light of this sun.

Lo! all-beneficent God, I still live. Thy goodness and thy patience have willed that I should yet longer exist. Thy design is to make me, ere my departure, more fit for an eternal life. I hear thy voice; I feel the risings of gratitude, and the operations of thy Spirit and thy grace; I will not resist them. Lord, teach me to act according to thy pleasure!

I hasten to the business of life. I will faithfully and industriously discharge it without removing from thee. It is my earnest intention carefully to shun and eschew everything by which I might displease thee. The joys and the pleasures which thy goodness may this day impart to me, shall be to me an incitement to dedicate to thee my heart and my life, and to become worthy of those higher delights which thou hast in keeping for me in heaven. The delusive pleasures of the earth shall not dazzle me by their false show. All the inclinations of my heart shall bear reference to thee alone. Omniscient God, thou knowest my heart and provest it. I see, beforehand, that notwithstanding my serious purpose and so firm resolution, I shall yet be, alas! but too often misled into the frailties from which even thy saints are not free. Ah! how does this pain me! I love thee, thou adorable Being, and yet how often, subdued by sinful propensities, shall I wrong thee! I feel my inability and foolishness;—but I trust in the support of thy Spirit and thy goodness, when the consciousness of my feebleness renders me timid. Ward off, O God, the temptations that may overpower my strength, and the trials under which I may fall. Forgive the failings which I commit in my precipitancy, and let me not run into those sins which may rob me of the blessed hope of attaining thy grace. I know no greater happiness than to be worthy of thy favour; no sweeter comfort than the feeling of thy love; no higher glory than to belong to Jesus. O! let me then

strive after this happiness, this comfort, this glory: so will my days be happy and peaceful; and not only will this brief, span-long life glide tranquilly and contentedly away, but I shall be infinitely more happy in that eternity to which this day brings me nearer.

DECEMBER 10.

Aspiring after Heaven.

My Christian citizenship, my hope, and my eternal destination are in heaven. To think of this, to become every day more confirmed in the persuasion of it, and always to regard the things of this world with growing indifference—such is my bounden obligation so long as I yet live on earth. God has encompassed my terrestrial existence with so many hardships and disappointments, in order that even here I might walk as if in heaven; and that while on earth my soul might collect treasures for eternity. And yet my foolish heart strives so earnestly after the vain joys and riches of this world, which will not present themselves to me in their true shape till the hour of death. All that I have prized at so high a rate in the present life will then appear to me as nothing; and that, on the contrary, which I have contemned will seem to me important above everything; and I shall perceive, too late, that it had merited my love during the whole series of my days. Therefore I will frequently and earnestly call to mind the vanity of whatever is mundane, the trouble with which it often fills my breast, and the bitter cares with which it oppresses my heart: I will form animated conceptions of the felicity of heaven, that the misery and the evils of this life may become lighter to me. When I consider that my stay here is but a short space, that I am already engaged in my journey to my celestial country, it can no longer grieve me that I have to endure both storm and mischance on the way. When I reflect that through the difficulties of my temporal pilgrimage my strength is to be exercised and augmented, and that this life is the season of sowing, the time to come the everlasting harvest; O! how is my soul exalted by the belief that they who now sow in

tears will hereafter reap in joy! I will, therefore, prudently employ this so precious seedtime, which cannot be regained if lost; I will be unwearied in goodness, that I may reap without ceasing.

Let it be my sole occupation to render myself worthy of that felicity which is appointed for me hereafter. Thither shall all my wishes tend; with this shall all my thoughts be employed; and this must be the object at which I must perpetually aim, and which I must allow no earthly object to conceal from me. Then will my actions be in heaven; whence I await my Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who will transfer my vile body, that it may be like to his glorified person, according to the strength of his mighty power, through which he can subjugate all things to himself.

DECEMBER 11.

The best-spent Life the longest.

To live long is the common and ardent wish of mortals, and, perhaps, the desire of my own soul at the break of this day. But supposing even, that after this life there were no other happier condition for my spirit—no immortality to be expected, it appears still neither wise nor rational to wish for a protracted existence. For even though a long life were free from all toil and trouble, it is not, on that account, worthy of our wishes, because old age occasions inactivity, and renders us incapable of enjoying the gratifications of the very life which we covet; because it is burdensome to others, in consequence of its peevish disposition, and places us in a state of helplessness. But when I know that I shall enter into a higher state of existence, and enjoy a more delightful society, why should I wish to remain longer in the world, and to become burdensome to those who can scarcely refrain from telling me that my departure would be more agreeable to them than my company?

Thinking thus, how can I continue earnestly to desire to attain to an advanced age? No; God forbid that I should be disposed to prescribe to Providence, how long it shall be

granted to me to remain in this state of trial. Be this my only wish and care, that through assiduous and conscientious industry I may succeed in doubling my time; and that I may, at the appointed hour, finish like a faithful labourer my task in this world. Should then the Omniscient extend my years to a late period, the retrospect of a life, dedicated to my duties, and to the good of my brethren, will alleviate the grievances of age; and the esteem and love of those for whom I had diligently and faithfully toiled, and whose welfare I ever consulted, will accompany me to the grave. With this prospect I need not fear the years of which I may be led to express my dissatisfaction when they arrive.

Father and Lord of my life! I leave to thy wise counsel to decide how long I shall still live on this earth. Thy goodness determines the period when I shall forsake this temporal world, shall lay down the burden of life, and enter into the bosom of the grave; and this period is for me the best and the most beneficial. I may die either early or late, in the bloom of my time, or with gray hairs; if I only retire from the earth in peace, then my full wish is accomplished.

DECEMBER 12.

Godliness preferable to all other Possessions.

Health, riches, honour, and love—these are the precious possessions for the acquirement of which the whole world so anxiously long; and could the morning prayer of the greatest portion of mankind be revealed, these advantages would be found to comprehend the chief summary of their wishes. And when I sincerely examine myself, I also discover in my own soul the same desire of health, riches, honour, and love. This desire is not culpable: but would that I might choose the right means of obtaining these earthly blessings! Would that I might supplicate God only for a pious heart!—so would all other blessings follow. For godliness is the way by which I may secure to myself health, riches, honour, and friendship: it is profitable for all things, and has the promise both of this and of the future life.

If I walk uprightly before God, I may also expect a sound and long life; for righteousness and piety defend the heart from those pernicious desires and passions which sap the constitution, and through vexation and remorse more or less rapidly destroy life. Is my heart devoted to God, then will the blessing of God accompany my undertakings; God will watch over me with his especial providence, prosper my plans, and crown my work with good success. And though I should not be able to arrive at vast wealth, godliness will confer upon me contentment and satisfaction; and these are greater riches, and more immense gain, than all the opulence of the earth. If I am virtuous, I shall obtain both honour and respect: every friend of rectitude will esteem me in a high degree, and pay homage to my character. And this will be to me a complete remuneration for all the calumnies of the ungodly and the infidel. If I am but sincerely disposed towards God, I shall never fail of having friends: I shall always find upright persons who will bestow on me their hearts, and make my interest their own.

Let it, therefore, be my first and most earnest resolution on the morning of this day, to be godly and virtuous! On this will depend the accomplishment of all my other wishes. The more godly I am, the more tranquilly, the more contentedly, and the more happily I shall live. Of all those things, after which the children of this world so vehemently strive, I shall not miss any, but, possessed of better treasures, shall not even once desire them. The healthfulness of my soul will render even the maladies of my body supportable, and arm my mind with courage and force, when I am compelled to suffer. The consciousness of having deserved God's grace will tranquillize when the world despises and disregards me, and thus will my soul steadfastly endure the hardships and evils of this life, and enjoy its gratifications with temperance and thankfulness.

DECEMBER 13.

Thanks for the Divine Protection during the Night.

After a long night the cheering rays of morning at length beam upon my eyes, and seem to dart even into my soul. I

again gaze on that bright glory of the sun, which proclaims with such high pomp its Maker's greatness. I slept in full tranquillity, while nature reposed also, exhibiting no sign of its wonted activity. I abandoned repose with the firm trust that God's goodness would allow me to behold the light of day once more. And this, through his mercy, has occurred: I live and enjoy my life. That I am now awoke from sleep is no lesser proof of the power of the Omnipotent, than if he had aroused me from the grave or created me anew. Ah! God, how easily in the past night might my bed have become my bier! How easily might misfortune have attacked me, and my entire property have been reduced to ruin and consumed! But through thy omnipotence and thy goodness, O my God, I have been preserved, and through thy powerful compassion protected from destruction. Therefore do I offer up to thee, from my whole soul, adoration, thanks, and joy.

I now return in comfort and in peace to the labour which thou, O Lord, hast appointed to my station. In all my actions I will still revere thy wonders, and with qui t contentment hold my reliance on thee. I know with certainty that that which thy bounty has determined for me will duly become my portion. Thou wilt as little withdraw thy hand from me as from the mute creatures whom thou so marvellously nourishest. Thou who feedest the birds will also beneficently and parentally provide for my necessities, and permit me to want nothing that pertains to the support of my existence. How inexcusable would be my conduct, should I this morning give place within my breast to any anxious solicitude! Thus long, under thy charge, have I already continued my life, and thy gracious kindness has never deserted me. Wilt thou in the future take less interest for me, or love me with diminished faithfulness? No; thou remainest the same as thou wast from eternity, changeless in thy love, unalterable in thy sentiments, and true in all thy promises. Sooner could I be wholly annihilated than thou cease to employ for me thy care.

With this most exhilarating conviction I can look forward with a courageous mind to whatever destiny may hereafter attend me. Under all circumstances I shall find in thee the God that is able to help, defend, rescue, and bless. No perplexity will be so great that thou shouldst not resolve it; no danger

so formidable that I shall not be secured, if thou keepest thy eyes open over me; no blessing can be conceived which I may not expect from thee, if I only walk in thy ways and observe thy commandments. So be it then my first business and my most eager care, that my heart may rest pure and devoted to thee, and hang upon thee in filial love; for all that can be termed happiness or well-being lies in the consciousness of an undefiled heart and in heartfelt peace. Nothing will be deficient to my happiness if I am only obedient to thy statutes, faithful in thy service, industrious in my calling, and solicitous for the true good of my soul.

DECEMBER 14.

The Winter Season.

Why should I be discontented with winter? How infinitely propitious is it to him who has learned to profit by solitude! Everything is replete with providential views and graciousness, even in the ordering of the seasons. To the Christian no winter's night is so rough and stormy that it should make him forget the goodness of God; nor nature ever, even in this dreary portion of the year, so barren that he may not learn something from her. The long night, which sometimes robs sleep of a few hours, is often blessed to me through pious thoughts. When my weary eyes prevent me in the evening from looking through myself, the hours of night after my first rest, have still light enough to array before me the sins of the day.

Where remain the seeds of verdure which I saw springing up in the autumn? Are the fields vanished? They and their seeds lie in repose, while to the snow is allotted the office of covering them with its shining mantle and warming them. The earlier the evening breaks in with a clear sky, the more speedily do the stars issue from their obscurity. And perhaps one of those departed mortals who lately dwelt on this ball of earth, now looks down out of these illuminated bodies and bewails my toil and labour: for I gather for time and lose for eternity.

See the variegated panes of glass, which the night-frost has

enamelled with the loveliest flowers!—a sunbeam wipes away these sparkling figures. Thus fancy pictures to me unsubstantial flowers that quickly disappear, when reality interrupts the dream. How do the rich misuse the winter! They waste alike the short days and the long evenings, as if their length were more than sufficient to provide for eternity. Be thou wiser, my soul: enjoy thyself in the Almighty God, whose greatness even winter proclaims to thee so loudly. For what a desolation is there in nature, and yet what a silent and wondrous energy, which my soul would not conjecture if spring did not reveal it to me! What an incomprehensible revolution of things, when winter devastates all nature, and that which was before so rich and glorious lies now before us in the most needy guise! O! is not this an image of the fate of man? And is there not in this a comfort to my soul?

For these reflections each winter-day affords me subjects: it excites me also to make a miser's use of my short time, and not to dream away an instant. I must indeed no longer curtail the shortened days and hours in sins and diversions; but the fewer hours the day now contains, the more good and praiseworthy actions I ought to perform. My time is of small duration, and it rolls on rapidly. My life is like the snow, which a dewy wind dissolves. I must haste and employ with precious industry the moments which are vouchsafed to me for my salvation. Then shall I, when life's winter closes around me, be able to look back with satisfaction on my past days, and to bless each of them in gladness. Place me, O God, through the support of thy Holy Spirit, in a condition to become approved of by thee, both in life and in death.

DECEMBER 15.

The Fewness and Sorrowfulness of the Days of Man.

My whole life is full of pain and sorrow: each day brings its peculiar trouble. How small is the number of those hours in which happiness and joy unite, in comparison with the multitude of the hours of woe! Where are the days

when I ever possessed those pure delights which no bitterness empoisons? Where are the days when I ever found all in happy unison, vigour of health, family felicity, peace of spirit, tranquillity of heart? Never shall I procure that which can fully appease my desires. Am I healthful; fortune fails me! are both mine; then I want a friend, or quiet of conscience! I may have as much, or as little, as destiny directs, still I shall never possess all that I wish for. At one time, the sensation of present evil tortures me; at another, I see those whose misery inspires me with pity, and diffuses sadness over me. Now hours of anguish, arising either from the pangs of awakening remorse, or from the turbulence of the inordinate raging blood, overcast my bosom's serenity. Sometimes, frustrated hopes, unexpected losses, or the chastising hand of Providence, afflict me. If I calculate the days in which I have been unhappy; the days which I have spent either in eating and drinking, or in sleep, or in empty amusements; the days in which I have been busied in endeavouring to attain earthly success; and, lastly, the days in which I have been sick, dissatisfied, and discontented;—if I compute these days of my existence, which I must deem in a certain measure lost, and oppose the total sum to the days of conscientious activity and true enjoyment, I shall find that there is little or no portion of my life that confirms not the axiom of Job: "Man born of a woman hath a short time to live, and is full of misery."

And what would be the result to me, if I lived without a wise and benignant Preserver in this so troubled and calamitous world? Then would my murmuring deserve consideration, and my wish to die be justified. But since the sufferings and hardships of this life are apportioned to me, under the government and superintendence of a merciful and almighty Being, I may rest well-pleased and tranquil. And this is the powerful consolation with which I support myself as often as I enter anew into the world. The belief of an omnipotent Ruler of heaven and earth sweetens all the bitterness of this passing life. The experience which I have already had of his gracious sway replenishes my heart with hope and ease. He will so regulate, according to his goodness, whatever befals me, that I shall have cause to praise him even amid the severest afflictions. I shall, during this

whole day, find ample occasions for this virtue. Even the spectacle of the manifold necessities under which my fellow-mortals groan, will teach me how kindly God deals with me, since he has made my state far more supportable than theirs. In all cases, I shall, however, likewise see, if I am observant of the Lord's proceedings, that he often indeed lays on a burden, but that he also never fails to send me help to bear and finally surmount it.

DECEMBER 16.

Prayer for spiritual Gifts.

God, Creator and Lord of heaven and of earth, merciful Benefactor and Father of mankind! I worship thee thankfully and humbly as the Author and preserver of my life, as the God of my salvation, as the one eternal and exhaustless source of all my happiness. I joyfully thank thee for my life, for my health, for my faculties, and for all the benefits of body and soul which I enjoy. I especially thank thee that thou hast sheltered me during the past night with thy almighty protection, and hast infused into me new vigour and new life. Thy goodness, O God, is renewed towards me each morning, and thy truth is great. They infinitely surpass all my deserts; they are far too large that I should ever worthily thank thee for them. Who am I, O God, who am I that thou showest to me such fatherly affection? I am a sinner, who have so often transgressed thy holy law, abused thy benefits, and thereby merited nothing save displeasure and punishment. Yes, Lord, how could I endure wert thou to enter into judgment with me? Yet thou actest not by me according to my transgressions, but according to thy grace in Christ Jesus. For the sake of him, my Mediator, thou art gracious to me, and visitest me not with thy just anger, as I have well deserved.

Behold, I wholly and solely devote myself to thee. I renew, in thy dread presence, my most serious purpose to repress all unruly desires that shall arise within me;—to conquer all the evil inclinations which belong to me, and in

my entire conduct to model myself, not after the example of the vicious, but after thy sacred ordinances. O God, do thou thyself sustain this pious resolution with thy grace, and grant me support to bring it to full maturity. Vouchsafe to me thy Spirit, that it may enlighten me, purify me, and guide me in the way of truth and virtue. Defend me also this day from all temptations to sin, and, if I am tempted, let me not yield. Incline me to keep strict watch over myself, and let the thought of thy omnipresence and omnipotence everywhere accompany me, that it may fill my heart with deep reverence towards thee. Let sincere love towards all men, together with the desire to be as useful to my brethren as the ability which thou hast imparted to me and my social relations will permit, be manifest on all occasions throughout my life. Lend me health and strength for the demands of my profession, and let thy blessing attend it. Grant that I may faithfully discharge all the duties of my calling, prefer the general good to my own private interest, and make thy honour, and the salvation of my soul, the final aim of all my efforts. Listen to me, Father of mercy, and be gracious to me for Jesus Christ's sake.

DECEMBER 17.

The Joy of the Heart.

I WILL constantly endeavour, in uprightness and brotherly affection, to live for the good of others, and not for myself alone, serving them in their need, counselling them in their difficulties, supporting them and assisting them whenever I can.—Such is the resolution with which I will this day return to the world, that in the evening I may be able to revert in memory to deeds of love and sympathy, and enjoy the consciousness that I have existed not merely for my own benefit, but also for that of my fellow-creatures, and that I have earnestly and disinterestedly promoted their welfare. There is no joy like the heart's joy. O! how often have I experienced the truth of this maxim, when with ardent commiseration I hastened to the aid of the necessitous, and con-

veyed comfort and hope into the bosom of the unhappy! How well was it with me, when I had dried up tears, and stilled sighs, or charitably pointed out the right way to the straying wanderer, or raised the fallen through my exhortations and entreaties. Then I felt that there are no purer delights than those of beneficence and mercy. And how imperatively does the name which I bear, the revered name of Christian, enjoin me to cherish such sentiments! Christ went about doing good, and I ought to hold one disposition with Jesus Christ. May no day, then, pass over me on which I shall not have performed some work of peace and kindness with a faithful mind and sincere zeal. But how often have I already formed this purpose, and how often been untrue to it, because the ingratitude of my brethren wounded me, and cooled the warmth of tenderness within me! But O! how dissimilar am I herein to my Redeemer, who, in the midst of prejudiced and thankless men, continued assiduously and indefatigably to teach, to admonish, to encourage, to warn, and to do good! Does then the ingratitude of a few invest me with a privilege of withdrawing my love from all? Or ought I not, like my Saviour, for the sake of goodness, to endure everything with gladness? Besides, ingratitude is not always the reward of benevolent actions and philanthropic exertions. And if with a uniformly friendly spirit I direct those whom error has overtaken how to retrace their steps; if without pride and arrogance I advise and instruct others; if with real sympathy I aid the needy in their distresses, and adapt myself with skill and foresight to time and circumstances, a tear of joy will often thank me, many a comforted and amended heart will bless me, and prosperous success will frequently recompense my exertions. But forbearance and consideration towards the failings of my brethren must herein be the principles from which I never deviate. For me, who am myself so weak, it is a duty to bear with the frailties of others; and it would be indefensible in me, were I to humble and distress the feeble by presumptuous contempt. Are they not greatly deserving of my pity and compassion? Ought I not to account those unfortunate who stand in need of support and of assistance? And is it not in this very indulgence and moderation towards the frail, the erring, and the blinded, that the force of Christian charity

ought to display itself? Therefore will I aid my brethren, and become neither weary, captious, negligent, cool, nor inactive, even though my kindness will be not always acknowledged, nor my love returned with thankfulness. And then, thou, O longsuffering Father, in heaven, will smile down upon me with approbation.

DECEMBER 18.

True and inexhaustible Sources of Joy.

The worshipper of Jesus Christ, the truly pious man, can never fail to find enjoyments:—this I have often experienced in my own heart. When I elevate my eyes on high to the God who has created me; when I consider his infinite, yet at the same time beneficent Majesty; when I represent to myself in a vivid manner his exalted and adorable attributes; must not blessed transports fill my soul? When it has been my happy lot to become acceptable to God through the amelioration of my heart; when I lift my soul up to him in prayers of thanks; when in the Spirit of my Redeemer, I am benignant and merciful, how is my bosom filled with the most rapturous and delicious feelings! And to how many pleasures am I daily invited by means of the works of God in the kingdoms of nature and of grace! They are constantly before my view, and I can at any time gratify myself with their beauties.

And how could I lose sight of them! how could I forget God, my salvation, since he never ceases to display himself in me, guiding me especially by his love; and since he ever renders his often wonderful, but always benevolent and holy, ordinances ultimately so clear in regard to me, that I am forced to own, that all he does is good! Yes, whenever with mute and pious attention I meditate upon the ways in which the Lord conducts me, I always find in them the most abundant source of the noblest contentment, and of the most effectual solace. When I think, O God, how thou hast hitherto ordered the whole world, then is my spirit of good cheer Yet further, when I turn my looks upon my own peculiar condi-

tion and appointment, and remember at the same time God's bounteous love, to which I owe all the happiness of my life, then do I, indeed, discover cause to exult with my whole heart. God gives blessings and success to my designs. He grants to me health, cheerfulness, vigour, and willingness for labour; he averts from me dangers and disasters! He has made me so happy that if my heart is not otherwise dissatisfied, I have no reason to desire greater prosperity. How many incitements do I hence receive to be contented and pleased with my lot! How gladly and thankfully must I recognise the advantages which God bestows upon me above so many thousands of my fellow-creatures! But then more especially am I truly filled with joy, when I think of my heavenly destination, and of the felicity which will fall to my share in a better world.

It will, therefore, depend upon myself, whether I shall pass this recently commenced day in quiet and happiness. If I am less satisfied, it is the fault of my own perverse and unbelieving heart, which does not rightly choose the means of contentment. But why should I be thus cruel towards myself, and render my own life painful and grievous? No; I will rejoice that I have God for my friend and helper. I will receive at his hands with gratitude the cheerful hours which he sends to me, and banish all vexation from my soul. By my sincere contentment will I praise him, and thus give a new zest to my existence.

DECEMBER 19.

Incitements to Amendment and Repentance, and the Necessity for both.

How can I, notwithstanding such strong encouragements and impulses to piety and sanctity, longer delay to correct my heart, and devote my soul to God? How can I dastardly despair of myself when I have God's support, and when my amendment is not solely my own work, but that of the Lord too? Or does the fear arising from the consideration of my sins overwhelm me in sorrow? Futile fear! Which is better—the anguish and terror of a conscience wounded by

voluntary and daring iniquities, and perpetually harrowed up afresh; or the tranquillity of a conscience healed and propitiated through unfeigned penitence? Or how can the sins which I have hitherto nurtured, to my perdition, in my bosom, still be so agreeable to me, that it should be hard to me to hate them as my enemies? Shall the phantasms and deceptions which so oft befool me have more power over my decisions than the truth, than the light, than the force of the best and strongest arguments and motives? Shall I not esteem and prize the humanity and grace with which my Saviour formerly received, and with which he still daily receives, contrite sinners? Shall I, through my own obstinacy, render nugatory God's paternal solicitude to bring me to repentance, and thus to rescue me from certain perdition?

Far be it from me to act so hastily toward myself. Equally distant from me be such a delusion as to suppose that I need no reformation, no repentance; for am I, indeed, justified before God because my conscience accuses me of no heinous transgressions of his commandments, of no acts of injustice, and of no gross viciousness? Do I not belong to the order of sinners, because I have never laid violent hands upon my neighbour's property, and never been guilty of slander or malignity? No! I cannot, when I strictly examine myself, deny that I have sinned against God, and am not worthy of his grace. Even in heaven, where, if I had repented, there would have been rejoicing over me—even in this heaven, if I persevered in sin, my name would be an abomination to God, to his angels and saints, because I should have grieved the Almighty and his Spirit through my impenitence. And whither should I at last flee for a retreat, when there was no longer refuge for me on earth, when my unprepared soul must depart hence, and heaven close its gates upon me!

But now, for the sake of my soul's deliverance and welfare, I will, so long as I have yet time for repentance, earnestly seek it before God; and may the gentle instigations which are made to me, prompt me not to expose myself to the danger of losing my eternal salvation. For how could I, how should I be able to endure such a result? Ah! Lord, carry me by thy ways through these deserts into thy heaven, to the company of thy elect and faithful. Lord Jesus, Son of God, do thou guide me with thy Spirit.

DECEMBER 20.

A grateful and affectionate Spirit well-pleasing to the Lord.

I BEHOLD with new rapture, in the just-arisen sun of the morning, the gracious countenance of my God. In its warming rays I feel his goodness. Methinks that the omniscient eye of the all-present Deity looks down upon me in every beam of light. He sees me, and sees the joyful emotions which his Spirit has wrought in my heart at the idea that he is my Creator, and that I am his creature. Is it possible that I should at this moment displease him? No; I believe, and doubt not, that he regards me with complacence. My joy is an effect of his benignity. It has his applause. He has not failed in the object of my creation, since I attain the destination of my being, and through the redemption of Jesus am fitted to the great aim of my existence—union and conciliation with God. Unspeakable consolation for me! How happy am I at this instant, how happy in the consciousness that I belong to God, and am an object of his approbation! For this reason only do I rejoice that I have been created. Blessed morn! when the sun which has introduced thee shall have been long forgotten, I will still with pleasure remember thee; even in eternity I will preserve thy memory.

But ah! wherefore does this felicity so rarely occur to me? Why does it so soon vanish like a dream? Will my heart within another hour please him as it does now? How many days have I already lived without feeling that which I now feel! And how many shall I yet hereafter lose in a like manner! But no, I will no longer lose them. The goodness of my God has shed over me the heavenly peace which his Son gained for me. His fatherly affection has, in this blessed hour, awakened within me and re-animated a zeal for the sanctification of my heart. It shall not be that I have felt this felicity in vain. I know now, by experience, how greatly joy in God transports and blesses the heart. I will strive, through the power of thy Spirit, almighty Lord, ever more to qualify myself for this seraphic happiness. I

will daily accustom myself more and more to receive even the smallest attestation of the goodness of my heavenly Father with ardent gratitude. I have now experienced how true it is, that to him who draws near to God, God in return draws near. For the future, therefore, I will always approach him as near as possible. What delight is every day provided for me if my heart is but open to it! Henceforward I will deem every day completely lost in which I have not, times without number, thought of God, and felt how happy I am that I have a Creator who, in Christ Jesus, his Son, has loved me from eternity.

DECEMBER 21.

Christian Humiliation before God.

When I consider what God is, and what I myself am, I must necessarily feel the deepest humility, and be incapable of approaching him otherwise than with the most lively feeling of my utter weakness and wretchedness. And this is also the only way in which I can find grace with the Deity. With a humble, lowly heart I will strive to please him, as one who with zeal pursues the pattern of his Son. My debasement and my meanness will not avert from me the countenance of the Majesty of heaven. For if I submissively perceive how little I am worthy of God's grace, then I shall never cease to render myself more deserving of it by chastening my heart: so will my soul raise itself full of reverence to the Lord, and my worship of the Almighty will be a worshipping in spirit and in truth. And how greatly do I feel myself called upon to exercise this humility when I reflect what I really am, and what I ought to be, and to become according to God's will;—when with strict impartiality I explore the motives of my good works, and compare my past life with God's commandments; when I remember how great God is, and how little I am myself; when I call to mind that the holy and righteous God judges me, and that I should be undone if it were to please him to summon me before his tribunal! Be then the dark error of pride for ever

banished from my heart! Let me vow to thee, O God, always to walk with pious humility in thy ways, to resign myself to thy counsel and to thy chastisement, and never to murmur nor complain when thou appointest to me sufferings and trials.

O God, teach me humility.—Thou art great and exalted above all; but I am nothing. Thou art eternal, and remainest as thou art, and thy years know no end; but I am a mortal man, and my life is only a shadow on the earth. Ah! Lord, teach me that I am nothing, and that all the good that there is in me I owe to thy favour. Behold, without thy light, I wander in a sightless path; for my eyes are far too dim to discern, in yonder distance, the everlasting infamy and dishonour which will be the finish of my pride if thou incline not thyself to show me, through thy Spirit, the footsteps of true lowliness and self-degradation. How long shall I wander from thy paths, and still esteem myself great in the midst of my real, though unperceived abjectness? When will thy illumination disperse this darkness of my soul? O God, I long and tarry for thy help: operate within me that perfect piety through which I may please thee. I am a sinner, and possess not that Christian reputation which I ought to have before thee; but be thou gracious to me; let thy face shine upon me, and thy right hand teach me.

DECEMBER 22.

Review of the various Blessings received from God during the Year.

The more nearly I approach to the close of the year, the more urgent do I feel the duty of reviewing the blessings of God with which its entire space has been replenished. But where, O Lord, shall I begin to count up the proofs of thy bounteous grace? They are immeasurable, incalculable, inexpressible. Thy goodness spreads itself out as widely as the heavens, and thy truth reaches as far as the skies extend. From the heavens, which are expanded over me, thou causest thy benefactions to descend upon me without ceasing.

Even for me must sun and moon shine, and the firmament be robed in clouds. Air and wind, dew and rain, heat and frost, day and night, must minister and be subservient to my life, to my support, and to my well-being. The earth, which is so great and broad, and full of thy goodness, hast thou given to me, with all that belongs to it, and with all that thou either in it or on it producest every day. Its hills and dales, its plains, its tilled lands and meadows, its woods and groves, its brooks and rivers, its seas and oceans, and all its multiplied kinds of living and lifeless things, contribute to each day's food and sustenance, to our clothing, and all the necessaries and conveniences of human existence. And what shall I say of those benefits which thou hast especially conferred upon me?—of the rich gifts with which thou hast endowed my heart and spirit, by inscribing thy law on the former, and creating the latter, through the faculty of reason and free-will, according to thy own image?—of the blessing which health and competency, which success in my labours and undertakings, and which love and friendship have afforded to me? Thou hast even until this present moment supplied every essential want, and all the comforts of my condition, and added even more than I needed. From how many dangers, to which I was every instant exposed, hast thou protected me! How much unmerited goodness hast thou daily lavished upon me! Men indeed have forsaken me; but thou, Lord, hast never either abandoned or slighted me; thou hast tended me with a parent's care, and thy munificence has exceeded my expectation as well as my deserts. Through the wonderful influence of Providence even strange and unknown men, nay, my very enemies themselves, have been constrained to be useful and helpful to me, and to advance my prosperity. How visible, O God, in all these events of my life, is thy hand, which has both guided me, and ruled in secret over me! I may either look into myself, or above, or around, or below; and I shall find everywhere evidences, everywhere effects, of the goodness of God:—every moment—even the present one, teaches me his mercy.

Now, Lord, with profound veneration, I return thanks to thy beneficent providence, and I praise thy unbounded goodness with inmost emotion. And the more evidently I per-

ceive that I am in no degree worthy of thy benefits, the more I admire thy compassion. To all thy other manifestations of grace subjoin, likewise, I beseech thee, this, that thou to-day also renew thy favour towards me, and that thou bless me yet further through the saving patience with which thou hast thus long indulged me. For what would the world be to me, or what should I be to myself, if thou wert to take away from me thy sanctifying grace?

DECEMBER 23.

The Consummation of the Christian Faith

"It is finished!"—So shall I be able one day to exclaim with joy and thankfulness after my Jesus, if I walk as he did before God, and persevere to the end. All that life has grievous, and all that death has bitter, will reach a termination. Even the happiest situation in the world has its woes and calamities. And how few are those who enjoy a happy station! How many, on the contrary, are they with whom one sad day invariably succeeds to another, who are obliged to struggle under accumulated misery, and whose sorrow is scarcely now and then interrupted by a few rays of joy. Many a trouble indeed has been already surmounted and brought to a close on the earth. To-day I sigh over this or some other burden; and to-morrow the Lord has already removed it from me, and lightened my heart. How often has experience taught me that I might successfully overcome adversities which I pictured to myself to be invincible. And this even of itself ought to invigorate my mind with confidence and fortitude, when any impending or present distress would render me downcast. This evil also will pass away, as so many evils have already done; this grief also will my heart support, as it has supported so many other afflictions, through the assistance of God.

But the grand and entire consummation, the passage through all the painful and sorrowful ways through which I have here had to wander, will then be achieved, when that full separation from this visible world shall take place, which I have to expect in death; when this frail, mortal veil of flesh, which now

causes me to contend with pain and sickness, with cares and hardships, with decay and weakness, shall fall into shreds. Want cannot oppress me there, where I shall no more need temporal goods; the injustice and the tyranny of men can no more torment me there; there their weak mortal arm is unable to reach; the frailties of the body, and its diseases and sorrows, can no longer affect the soul, loosened from these bonds. All the toils of this earthly pilgrimage, every sharp conflict against the might of sin, every oppression of iniquity and villany, and all the afflictions with which the state of probation is filled and loaded, will then be finished, and they will be finished very soon. Then will it be with me as if I had awoke out of an agonizing dream, or had been delivered from some great danger, and see myself in safety: I shall then be indemnified for all the misery of this life by eternal joy.

Help me, O God, to vanquish those afflictions which are still destined to me in the latter days of my course. Help me to fulfil the duties, to the exercise of which I am bound as a man and as a Christian. Help me to maintain the warfare which I must wage with vice and the world. Help me to pass to thy honour this day, which thou hast given to me for my amendment. And finally, when the completion of my earthly course arrives, let it be hailed by me with a joyful exultation of spirit, and let me rapturously exclaim, "It is finished!"

DECEMBER 24.

The Blessings attending the Coming of the Saviour.

With supreme joy, and pious thankfulness, do I to-day contemplate the invaluable blessings in which the world and I also have been made to participate through the birth of the Saviour. Glad in heart do I unite my exulting voice in one accord with the hymns of praise of the celestial choirs, and shout aloud, "Glory be to God on high!" For if I this day, with filial confidence, call upon God as my Father; if I cheer and comfort myself with the assurance of his parental love, and put my trust in his wise providence; to whom, except to the Redeemer of the world, do I owe this happiness

and this bliss? He indeed it was who, through his coming and his gospel, banished slavish fear out of the hearts of men, and again restored the honour of God among the human race. How sadly, ere he spoke his word of peace and light, were the reverence of God, and the worship which is due to him, debased and mistaken on the earth! What a heartless and corrupted service of the Divine Being, and what an abominable service of idols, prevailed in the world! How had the kingdom of darkness extended its boundaries, and how small was the number of the worshippers of the true God! When Jesus Christ appeared, a light to lighten the Gentiles, the night of superstition and ignorance fled, the day of salvation dawned, and peace came upon the earth, the peace of faith, of love, and of hope. The altars of the false divinities vanished; and to the Eternal, who dwelleth not in temples made by men's hands, the only begotten Son of God turned and inclined the rational heart; he taught that God as a Spirit, was to be worshipped only in spirit and in truth; he strengthened all hearts through tidings of everlasting life.

O! eternal thanks be to thee, thou Son of the Most High, for these blessings of thy divine doctrine and thy sublime pattern; eternal thanks be to thee that thou didst not disdain to take upon thee our human nature, and become in all things, sin excepted, similar to thy brethren. Even for me hast thou, through thy teaching and thy promises, obtained everlasting salvation; even me hast thou reconciled with God, and to me given peace for my soul. O! would that I might become ever worthier of these blessings of thy love, firmer in my faith in thee, more steadfast in my affection towards thee! Would that I might hereafter belong to the number of the elect, to whom thou wilt say: "Come, ye blessed of the Lord, and inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

O Jesus, how shall I sufficiently praise thee for the blessings which thy incarnation has conferred upon me. Make me at least duly thankful towards thee, and let not only these feelings, but, much more, my whole life, testify the gratitude to which thy love has engaged me. Especially grant that on this day my heart may be filled with the holy impulses of devotion and admiration. When I meditate upon the ever-adorable mystery of thy assumption of the flesh, O! let me

then be transported in spirit into that kingdom of the blessed, where to thee, thou woman-born Redeemer, all the perfect in glory pay homage. Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, vouchsafe to me, and preserve to me, the faith that justifies me, that I may be a partaker of thy peace, and acceptable to thee. Let me feel the joy of thy salvation, to the end that I may magnify thee on the earth, in love and piety, till I shall hereafter unite with all the angels in celebrating thee.

DECEMBER 25.

The Birth of Christ.

O! WHAT a happy night was that in which thou, Immanuel, was born! I think of it with the holiest rapture on the morning of this festive day of the memory of thy birth. Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men!—be this also my hymn on the great day on which the Saviour of the world was born. How could I remain mute amid the universal strains of all heaven? I have indeed the greatest cause to rejoice over this wonderful event, which strikes heaven with amazement. I enjoy the full fruits of the manifestation of Jesus, which the angels exalt to the praise of the most excellent. Even for me to-day the Saviour was born. Even for my salvation, he endured weakness, necessity, and want. Even in me God glorifies his love and the riches of his mercy through his Son, whom for my salvation he sent into the world. My salvation and my peace is Jesus Christ.

Heartily then will I join the multitude of the heavenly hosts to praise Him who spared not his only begotten Son, but has given him up for me. I will celebrate him, my king; I will worship him, I will extol him with exceeding joy. I will contemplate the deep mystery through which he, who might well have possessed joys, chose the misery of this mortal life, and became my brother. I will, so long as nights and days succeed each other in alternate change, be mindful of the night in which my Jesus was born. Yea, even then, when no more night shall be, I will rejoice in him, in heaven, and bless the hour of his healing birth.

In spirit I reverentially approach to thy manger, O incarnate God! I admire, with awful astonishment, the greatness of thy love, which moved thee to exchange heaven for earth, instead of riches to choose poverty, and instead of infinite grandeur, humiliation. O! be blessed to me, Immanuel, in thy first tears, in thy first poverty, in thy first sufferings! O! how does the thought ravish me, that thou hast become my brother! How incalculably important for me is the happiness which thy birth imparts to me! It must then remain my chief, my constant care, to tarnish thy honour and majesty by no sinful thoughts, by no culpable inclination, by no criminal action; but to glorify thee by my faith, and by my strict adherence to, and imitation of, thee. It must constitute my most serious solicitude to preserve that peace which thou hast obtained for me through the grace of God. Be these my determinations on this the feast of thy blessed nativity! Be these the thanks which, for thy unspeakable love, I offer up to the Father in heaven.

DECEMBER 26.

The Mystery of the Redemption.

Let my soul piously contemplate, in this hour of morning meditation, the holy mystery which the nativity of Christ displays to us! Let my spirit occupy itself, in the most reverential meditation on the Lord, who was born at Bethlehem! Let not the poverty and the humiliation under which he entered into the world, and the abjectness of his early life, prevent my finding the Lord of glory, who, of his own free will, debased himself for my salvation, into the condition of servitude! Glory be to God on high, and adored be the decree of love and grace, which he has executed in Jesus. How nobly has the word of prophecy, which was spoken on that stupendous night to the astonished shepherds, been accomplished! Before the rays of the heavenly light which Jesus lighted in the world, the night of superstition and ignorance has fled; and we ourselves are children of light, and, as such, look up, with confidence and joy, to God, whom we ho-

nour as the Father of mankind by our veneration, our confidence, and our love. He, as the great Prophet, proclaims the council of God concerning salvation: he shows the way to the most blessed consummation: his are both the counsel and the deed; his are understanding and might. For in him lie hidden all treasures of wisdom and knowledge: supported by his strength, the powers of the world and of hell are too weak to overthrow me. He is the Father of eternity:—in order to carry me, after a short residence on this earth, to the blessedness of heaven, he forsook heaven and visited the earth. He is the Prince of Peace: he reconciles heaven and earth, and makes the Judge my friend, and the friend my Father. Hallelujah! to me is a Saviour born! To me a Deliverer and friend is given, who never abandons me.

Lord! behold, the dust which thou hast exalted to heaven—behold, thy servant worships thee. Thy humiliation is the cause that I can rejoice in thy elevation. O! those first tears, which thou sheddest on the bosom of thy holy mother; that nakedness, in which thou layest; that night, in which thy first cry was heard; these, thy first sorrows on the earth, were the beginning of the great joy which arrived to all people when thou wast born—they are the commencement of my salvation. I am also one of the happy creatures for whom thou hast been born man. And that through thee I can make a claim to the kingdom of felicity—for this be thy compassion magnified. Be it magnified in every thought which I direct to myself! be it magnified in every recollection of death and eternity! Be it magnified hereafter by me, when, before thy throne, I shall have received the immortality to which thy incarnation and humanity have destined me!

DECEMBER 27.

The Merits of Jesus.

In thee rests all comfort, compassionating Jesus, who from thy dwelling-place of joy, camest into this world flowing with tears, that I might not perish in eternal sadness! Lord Jesus! how consolatory is it for me, and how exhilarating to

my heart, that thou didst assume the human form, and even in the smallest weakness of my mortal nature, hast been like to myself, and the companion of my misery. Wherefore do I still bewail the bitterness and afflictions of my earthly course, since, in thy birth, such glorious solace for all the misery of my pilgrimage here is contained? Thou hast, through thy incarnation, procured for me endless blessings, which content all the wants of my heart: thou hast soothed my sorrow, and removed my cares. I find quiet for my soul when I accept thy yoke, and learn from thee.

In everything that causes me solicitude, in all humiliations, in all my concerns, I have in thee, thou highly-magnified Son of God, a counsellor and a helper. When I perceive, with melancholy regret, how many friends there are in the world who forsake me in the hour of need, who stand unmoved at the spectacle of my anguish and my pains, then do I turn my regards to thee, my Saviour, and in thee find comfort, assistance, and defence.

Under this happy confidence, tranquil and without anxiety, I bend my steps into the world. It is even the same world in which thou, O Jesus, hast sustained so much, and thereby sanctified all my destinies, and rendered them mild. It is even the same world from which thou hast so triumphantly departed, and thus bequeathed to me the promise, that thou wouldst also, in fulness of time, receive me to thyself. It is even the same world into which I, as thou didst, entered needy, naked, and weeping. Therefore I dare to hope, that so long as I am a pilgrim thou wilt further lead me with thy hand, and refresh me with thy healing. Yes, God can, God will vouchsafe to me everything in his beloved Son. From his love I can expect all; from his pity I can hope everything. This world is yet too small to satisfy my wishes, and to make my hope complete. There is still another world reserved for me, where I shall enjoy, in its utmost plenitude, the blessed harvest of Christ's earthly transformation. Thither bear me in due season, Immanuel, that I may be infinitely happy, even as thou art happy.

DECEMBER 28.

The Bitterness of Life, and the Frailty of human Nature, taken away by Christ.

If, among the innumerable days of the world, a day and hour had not appeared in which the Son of the Most High became man, it were a misfortune to belong to the human race. Only since this natal day of Jesus can it be said by man—blessed be the day on which I was born! To be a man is, for him who loves truth and virtue, frequently something so shaming and derogatory, so painfully humiliating, that it is difficult to refrain from bitter complaints against the Author of our mortal existence.—But, on recollecting the holy and divine Being who wore the resemblance of us in everything, save only in our guilt, we feel ourselves again reconciled to the human nature. Its weakness, its corruption, and its insensibility distress and disquiet us no longer. For can its weakness redound as a reproach to us, or had God wished to signalize us through it as contemptible creatures, unworthy of his patronage and affection, since he has sent to us his Only-born, and clothed him in this same nature? And as in regard to the feebleness of our nature, so likewise in respect to its corruption, does the incarnation of Jesus comfort us. For this our race has had a member who was found righteous and justified, even before the tribunal of God; our nature has been, consequently, once innocent and pure; and it is, therefore, yet possible, that it may again be pure and uncorrupted. Ought not this to reconcile me to my condition? And did not Jesus become man for this express intent, that he might snatch human nature from perdition, and found an institution through which all who will reform and improve themselves, shall have the participation of a higher support and assistance? And how nobly has this dispensation preserved its beneficent influence! It has armed believers with celestial power, has filled their souls with celestial sentiments—it has enabled them to become the children of God.

Lord Jesus! change me into so happy a creature! Hinder me, through thy grace, from debasing myself to the brutes

by stiff-neckedness and obduracy, and irrationality and wickedness: and grant that I may evermore approximate to the honour which thy descent to the earth has brought to me. In all my doings my preferment and my destination must be manifest. Let me not defile, by infamous appetites and lusts, that nature which thou hast so eminently glorified, but hallow it, and keep it free from all pollution, both of flesh and spirit. But especially render me capable of imitating thee in thy love and in thy humility, and of remaining always thy faithful follower. Guard and watch me, that the time may never come when I might wish that thou, or myself, had not been. Let me, on the contrary, exercise strict care to conduct myself conformably to the great aim and object of thy incarnation, and live as a man who has been ordained, by his Redeemer, to a state of inexpressible happiness.

DECEMBER 29.

Life to be devoted to providing for Eternity.

I ADMIRE, O God, the wise and benignant provisions which thou hast made relative to the life of man. The years of the suckling, as well as those of the hoary aged man, are entered in the volume of thy providence. How dear must my welfare and my happiness be to thee, since thou so kindly takest care that my days shall be void of none of thy blessings! This my soul knows now with joy and thankfulness. How could I be so ungrateful or so inconsiderate as to abuse these blessings? No; be it my most zealous solicitude to live according to thy commandments, and to die thy child, since on both of these efforts depends my eternal safety. How valuable must every moment be, which thy goodness grants to me, O God, for my qualification for heaven. A life in which I devoted more to the present world than to the task of preparing myself for eternity, accords not with the aim which thou, my Creator, hadst in view when thou placedst me here. I live not in order to eat, to drink, or to sleep; I live not in order to labour for the happiness of my family; I live not in order to learn sciences and arts; I live not in

order to collect riches, and urge my way to high posts of honour—I live for the sake of eternity. And a life in which I spend more time in such objects than on the salvation of my soul, is to be deemed lost.

But how often have I already pursued these reflections without becoming wiser, without retaining in view the scope of my existence, and without laying out to the best account so inestimable a possession as time? Were not thy patience so great, my Lord and my God, thou wouldst long ago have suffered me to perish in my sin. But, ever indulgent and beneficent, thou favourest thy weak child with increased respite for amendment, and still loadest him with those bounties which have been already so greatly abused. Praise be ascribed to thee for this, thou God of mercy and love! Let the year, swiftly verging to its close, teach me to make a more conscientious application of my winged, irretrievable hours, and to live for heaven without neglecting the duties incumbent on me as a citizen of the world. How can I hesitate when I stand already on the brink of the grave, and must dread, every moment, to sink into it! O! among all the affairs and employments which yet press upon me in this life, the study of my spiritual improvement must remain the first, and the most serious of all. This day must not, as so many former ones, swell the sum of my lost days! Nature, experience, and religion preach to me the necessity of repentance. My body, the decay of my vigour, and thy holy scriptures tell me that I am mortal. O! then I will not delay, my God, to listen to thy voice, and to practise the wisdom in which it instructs me.

DECEMBER 30.

The Heart called to its Account for Time.

I NOW stand on the extreme boundary of a year, and look back, like a traveller from the summit he has attained, on that considerable portion of my existence which I have now completed; I review in what manner I have walked in the ways through which God commanded me to go; I sigh

over the weakness of my heart, over my numerous lost days, over so many neglected opportunities of goodness, and rejoice in the righteousness which through God's assistance I have executed—in the blessings which the All-beneficent has imparted to me, and in the submission and fortitude with which I have endured the sufferings that were doomed to me. I feel that the purpose of good indeed dwells in my breast, but the accomplishment of it encounters many obstacles. And how could I, under such circumstances, run into temptation! how could I consider myself perfect, and exalt myself above others whose deviations are perhaps less than my own. Instead of this foolish and perverted self-love, far rather will I in these days, which admonish me to pensive meditation, and which afford a pause to the noisy tumult of ordinary distractions, in these sacred days, explore and investigate my heart. I will renounce all that flattery and delusion by which I have so often imposed upon myself. I will interrogate my heart with sincerity and answer with candour: Have I this year improved myself with regard to religious feeling; have I become in my calling more faithful, in my belief more steadfast and stronger, in my love more disinterested and noble, in watchfulness over myself more assiduous, in the will and the practice of virtue, more constant and zealous? Have I constantly shown myself wiser in my undertakings—more prudent and more cautious? Have I fulfilled the duties which I owe to God and to the world with all possible conscientiousness and fidelity? Have I guarded myself from consenting to any sin, and from ever doing anything contrary to God's commandments?

O! thou, my heart, to which these important questions refer, examine thyself well, ere a reply be pronounced. Spare thyself not, when thou here and there discoverest errors, nor seek to conceal them. For from whom wilt thou veil them? from men?—ah! perhaps they know them better than thou art aware: from thyself?—thy inward feelings would disclose to thee that which thou wouldst hide even from thyself: from God?—He dives to the lowest depths of thy bosom, and would punish thee for thy falsehood, hypocrisy, and deceit. Be, therefore, ingenuous and upright; mark thy faults, acknowledge them with shame and repentance, and humbly seek thy pardon through Him who has suffered and

died for thee. Findest thou aught of good in thyself? render thanks to God that he has produced it within thee, and labour hard to increase in it. And finally, under all these considerations, and in all thy doings, pray thus without ceasing: Let thy blessing light upon me, Almighty God! Let my feet be found in thy ways, and deign thyself to teach me by what means I may please thee. Endue me with a holy reliance on thy goodness, with brotherly love, with the peace of piety, and with that wisdom which is apt in the knowledge, and cheerful in the exercise, of every duty, through Christ Jesus, my Saviour. Amen.

DECEMBER 31.

Thanks for the Mercies experienced during the Course of the elapsed Year.

Only this day yet remains, and then, through thy mercy, O Lord and Father of my life, I shall have concluded an entire year. How could I advance to meet the dark future without self-reflection, and without grateful exaltation of heart towards thee! how could I allow the present day to disappear without calling to mind those countless blessings which thou hast showered upon me during this lapse of time! That which I should do, if to-day the last morning of my life had dawned; the same will I now do on this last day of the departing year. But what should I do, if I beheld the rising of the sun, void of all hope to see its setting? How should I act, if I stood on the limits of life, as I now stand on the year's boundary! I should, if I were wise, think with repentance and contrition on my past days: I should recollect with the most ardent emotion the bounties of my God, and then, in faith in my Redeemer, act as commanded by the will of my Creator. I will regard myself as a dying man, and with sincerity observe the duties which I should under such circumstances practise.

With shame and remorse do I revert in memory to the days which I have lived. I cannot impute to them any worth, for I have spent them in follies and sins. Nothing is

left to me, but to flee for refuge to thy mercy, and to thy love in Jesus Christ. Bitter and humiliating as this consciousness must necessarily be to my heart, yet is the remembrance of thy favours, of which the number widely exceeds my transgressions, agreeable and delightful to me. I praise thee for thy inexpressible goodness, which on every day and in every hour of this year, has magnified itself in me; for so many benefits, unnoticed and unknown, which I have each moment received from thee; and for that most admirable, wondrous patience, through which thou hast borne with me in my multiplied offences.

Lord, if this thy grace were not my comfort and my reliance, I could not without terror endure the retrospect of this late portion of my life, which thy beneficence has bestowed upon me. But now I regard it with a tranquil heart, because it affords to me another and most verifying assurance of the continuation of thy grace. With the utmost confidence I approach to a new revolution of time, for thy goodness will also still be renewed with each successive morning; thy omnipotence will protect me, thy wisdom will direct and govern me. Thou wilt bless whatever I undertake with a heart full of love and fidelity, and with affiance in thee; thou wilt, above all, bless the zeal with which I aspire after thy kingdom. In thy compassion I shall find the accomplishment of all the wishes which in the silence and submission of my heart I breathe forth to thee. To live in thy compassion will be for me the happiest of all lives, and to die in thy grace the most gentle and blessed of all deaths.

THE END.

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